

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District**
other name/site number: **The Mountain View Ranch**

2. Location

street & number: **503 East Dry Creek Road** not for publication: **n/a**
city/town: **Buffalo** vicinity: **n/a**
state: **Montana** code: **MT** county: **Fergus** code: zip code: **59418**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: **Private**

Category of Property: **District**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: **n/a**

Name of related multiple property listing: **n/a**

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	Total

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural fields, agricultural outbuilding, storage, animal facility; irrigation facility

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: fields, agricultural outbuilding; irrigation facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER: Rustic

Materials:

foundation: **CONCRETE**

walls: **LOG, WOOD/plank,**

roof: **METAL/steel, ASPHALT, WOOD/shingle, EARTH**

other: **n/a**

Narrative Description

Regional Environmental Context

Located in the heart of Montana’s spectacular Judith Basin, the Naylor Brothers Ranch is set in Fergus County, a semi-arid agriculturally-based region primarily used for livestock production, irrigated and non-irrigated hay, and grain production. The historic ranch occupies the landscape immediately west of the foothills of the scenic Big Snowy Mountains. The valley opens to the west and north of the ranch, revealing a valley-wide agricultural landscape that is met by the Belt Mountains to the west. To the north, the rolling rural landscape stretches seemingly to the horizon. The seasonal Dry Creek meanders out of the Big Snowy Mountains to the northwest, traversing the northeastern portion of the ranch until its union with Ross Fork Creek, which flows just west of the ranch.

The entire 1,200 acres of the ranch that is associated with the period of significance is located on the west side of State Highway 191, which runs along a north/south corridor immediately adjacent to the ranch. Historically, the Naylor Brothers Ranch supported a variety of agricultural output, including a variety of grain production (predominantly wheat), hog, cattle, poultry and sheep production.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: **A**

Areas of Significance: **AGRICULTURE**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): **n/a**

Period(s) of Significance: **1909-1931**

Significant Person(s): **n/a**

Significant Dates: **1909, 1915, 1917, 1920, 1926, 1931**

Cultural Affiliation: **n/a**

Architect/Builder: **Floyd Naylor, Axel Johnson**

Narrative Statement of Significance

Statement of Significance

The Naylor Brothers Ranch is significant under Criterion A as an important representation of the triumphs and travails associated with Montana farming and ranching during the first thirty years of the twentieth century. The ranch buildings endure as significant reminders of the Golden Era in Fergus County when the railroad-promoted homesteader influx, use of federal land law to encourage settlement, and new dry land farming techniques brought population and prosperity to the Judith Basin. A newcomer to Montana in 1909, ranch founder Floyd Naylor participated in the great wave of homesteading that spread across Montana in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Naylor and his brothers established their ranch on tracts originally patented under federal land law, and built a diversified system of scientifically-based Progressive Era ranching and farming practices. A man of the Progressive Era, Naylor’s extensive participation in county Extension Service programs gave him access to the latest farming techniques, livestock management practices, and farm efficiency procedures allowed him to persevere and prosper, especially following the epic environmental change after 1919, when drought forced hundreds of farmers throughout the region into bankruptcy.

Further, the buildings and structures that stand today were constructed by Naylor during the period of his greatest success, from 1915 to the mid-1920s. These (and the other contributing resources at the ranch) provide insight into the type of agricultural production in which the ranch engaged during these boom times. Two of the property’s most prominent structures, the Naylor Barn (feature 1), and the grain elevator (feature 11) are representational of both of Naylor’s success and his Progressive Era-influenced approach to farm management. The large barn was constructed to accommodate Naylor’s belief in the market value of winter sheep production, made successful in part through a county demonstration program sponsored at the Naylor Brothers Ranch. The grain elevator, meanwhile, is a direct testament to the early success of dry-land wheat production prior to 1919, where the bounty was so great as to justify the construction of a privately-used grain elevator at the ranch. This prominent structure is reputed to be Montana’s first privately-owned grain elevator.¹

The Naylor Brothers Ranch is also significant as a reminder of failure and economic collapse introduced by the powerful force of the rural depression of the 1920s, which followed the Progressive Era and was exacerbated by the more generally recognized Great Depression. Despite Naylor’s progressivism and success, he and his financiers were unable to withstand the economic pressures of the times, and the ranch was lost to foreclosure in 1931.

Criteria Considerations: The blacksmith shop (feature 8) was likely moved within the district boundaries at the beginning of the period of significance. Because the building was moved within the period of significance, gains its significance for its associations with the Naylor Brothers operation, and is the only building within the district that is moved, it does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B.

¹ The assertion that the grain elevator is the first such privately-owned structure was made by Floyd Naylor’s daughter Eleanor in a biographical sketch she wrote of her father. While potentially true, the statement is not supported by known evidence and is very difficult to prove in any case.

9. Major Bibliographic References

(see continuation sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
 Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1200 Acres

UTM References:

(NAD 27)

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	12 594928	5185753	K	12 596952	5182536
B	12 596558	5185822	L	12 596612	5182504
C	12 596565	5185415	M	12 596617	5182167
D	12 595757	5185402	N	12 595804	5182154
E	12 595759	5184598	O	12 595792	5182567
F	12 596171	5184599	P	12 595380	5182549
G	12 596195	5183801	Q	12 595362	5183342
H	12 596596	5183813	R	12 594971	5183368
I	12 596593	5182998			
J	12 596989	5183010			

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): S½NE¼ and SE¼ of Section 7; S½NW¼ of Section 8; SW¼ and the W½NW¼ of Section 17; NE¼, N½SE¼, and the SE¼SE¼ of Section 18; NE¼NE¼ of Section 19; and the N½ of Section 20, Township 12 North Range 16 East

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic 1200-acre property occupies S½NE¼ and SE¼ of Section 7; S½NW¼ of Section 8; SW¼ and the W½NW¼ of Section 17; NE¼, N½SE¼, and the SE¼SE¼ of Section 18; NE¼NE¼ of Section 19; and the N½ of Section 20, Township 12 North Range 16 East, Montana Prime Meridian. The boundary of the historic property is also shown as the line on the accompanying location map and the Buffalo, MT (1970) and Moore SW, MT (1995) USGS 7.5 Minute maps.

Boundary Justification

The selected boundaries mirror the lands occupied and farmed by the Naylor Brothers during their period of occupation, from c. 1909 through the foreclosure of the ranch in 1931. The boundaries form a substantial portion of the current ranch, encompassing the historic building cluster associated with the Naylor Family.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: **Jim Jenks**
 organization: **Wheelhouse Consulting** date: **August 11, 2008**
 street & number: **5300 Parkview Dr #1074** telephone: **208-818-1886**
 city or town: **Portland** state: **OR** zip code: **97035**

Property Owner

name/title: **Mr. Durl Gibbs**
 street & number: **503 East Dry Creek Road** telephone:
 city or town: **Buffalo** state: **MT** zip code: **59418**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Page 1

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Description of Resources

The fifteen contributing resources of the historic ranch display significant rustic rural vernacular characteristics and are arranged in a manner consistent with ranching practices in the latter half of the nineteenth century and first half on the twentieth century. All of the contributing features of the ranch are attributed to the Naylor era of use, including the so-called Naylor Barn (feature 1), gravity flow water system (feature 2) and man-made pond and dam (feature 3), hog and sheep barn (feature 4), greenhouse (feature 5), bunkhouse (feature 6), garage and shop (feature 7), blacksmith shop (feature 8) which may be a building associated with the Horace Collins era of ownership and reused by the Naylor Brothers, the horse barn (feature 9), scale shed and scales (feature 10), grain elevator (feature 11) and machine shed (feature 12).

The historic building cluster is adjacent to intact historic agricultural fields which enhance the ranch's historical integrity and convey the historic use patterns of the property, with approximately 1200 acres of wild hay surrounding the historic building cluster. The agricultural fields are counted collectively as one contributing site.

Feature 1 ~ The Naylor Barn (also known as the Big Barn) (constructed 1926-1927, one contributing building)

This building is situated on the far southeastern edge of historic property's building cluster. It was constructed over the fall of 1926 and the winter of 1927 by local builder Axel Johnson, who constructed other large barns and buildings in the area. This imposing wood-frame building is 80' x 80'. It is clad entirely with 5½" lapped horizontal northeastern fir siding and was originally intended for use as a sheep barn. On barns, horizontal siding is noted as providing added strength, at a cost of accelerated deterioration.² The building rests on the ground, on a substantial perimeter timber frame foundation, though a concrete foundation was originally intended. Builder Axel Johnson visited the barn in the 1980s (Johnson was in his 80s) and he noted to the current owners that the Naylor's apparently intended to pour a foundation in the summer, but that was never done. Because the barn was constructed in winter, tree stumps were used to support the barn.³ Some of these stumps are still in place, and are deteriorating. The roof is comprised of deteriorating wood shingles, and the barn is topped with a prominent, centrally-located metal ridge ventilator. The ventilator contains a fan that is activated by rising hot air generated within the loft. The feature is surrounded by a barnyard, which is enclosed by a wood fence. An east-west running shelter belt, planted by current owner Durl Gibbs in the 1970s, is located approximately 150' west of the barn. Floyd Naylor took part in several farm demonstrations related to shelter belts throughout the late-1920s, but drought and soil erosion killed his plantings. The current ranch shelterbelts were planted during the modern era by Mr. Durl Gibbs, the current owner.⁴

The east (front) elevation outlines the gambrel roof of the barn which creates the defining shape of the building. The gambrel roof allows for greater hay storage in the second story loft. Large shed (or half-gable) roof extensions are located on the north, south, and west (rear) elevations and are tied together with hipped ridgelines at the northwest and southwest corners.

The east terminus of the gambrel roof ridge features a triangular hay hood, a roof extension which protected and supported the pulley system used to load hay into the loft. The sliding wood hay door is centrally located on the elevation, located directly beneath the hay hood. The door itself is raised and lowered via a rope and pulley system that is operated in the barn's loft. The door is of equal lengths on three sides, with the top of door triangular in shape which fits

² H.E. Murdock, *Farm Buildings*, (Bozeman: Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 131—1926) 13.

³ Cory Merrill, "Montana State Historic Preservation Office Historic Site Evaluation Form for the Naylor Brothers Ranch/Mountain View Ranch," (Helena: 2008)

⁴ Conversation between ranch manager Cory Merrill and the author, July 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 2

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

into the hay hood. The door is flanked on both sides by single small, equally-spaced openings. These openings likely were used not only for light, but also for ventilation, a critical component of barns used for hay storage that is more prone to combustion.⁵ The roof features deep eaves which extend approximately 18" from the building to protect the openings and funnel moisture away from the foundation and vents.

The ground-level portion of the east elevation features two large, square wooden sliding wagon doors located within the north and south shed extensions. These functional doors allowed animals, equipment and wagons to move easily between the barn and outdoors, and were themselves a late-nineteenth century innovation which reduced damage to barns and the barn doors when opened in high winds—an important consideration on Montana's north central plains.⁶ A wood Dutch door that allows the top and bottom portion of the door to open independently is set centrally within this elevation. Doors of this type were important in barn design, where the top can be opened for light and ventilation at the same time the bottom is closed to restrict animal movement. A horizontal ribbon of three wood-framed, fixed, four-light 2/2 windows are located on either side of the Dutch door. As is common with barns, the panes of these windows are small to help prevent breakage and to avoid large drafts over the livestock. Above the south bank of windows is a small wood door which provides access to the floor of the interior loft.

The north (side) elevation features nine (9) regularly-spaced wood-framed, fixed, four-light 2/2 windows along the elevation. The windows are large enough to maximize the natural light available in the interior, and small enough to minimize winter drafts. This is characteristic of a barn known as a Wisconsin Dairy Barn, a type of farm structure which shares some characteristics, like this window arrangement, with the Naylor Barn.⁷

The west (rear) elevation features the same window arrangement as the north elevation, plus single windows of the same style high in the gambrel-end of the second story. These single windows are placed at the north and south sides of the elevation, near the crux of the gambrel roof's upper and lower slopes.

The south (side) elevation features a pair of top-hung wagon doors on the far western portion of the exterior. A second pair of wagon doors is centrally located. The doors have been removed from this latter door opening, and the opening has been boarded closed. Two sets of two wood-frame, fixed, four-light 2/2 windows flank this opening. On this elevation, the barn deterioration is most evident, with the shed roof line sagging as much as 12" over the boarded closed door space.

On the interior, the ground floor of the barn has an open floor plan and is used today for calving as the ranch no longer maintains sheep. Sixteen evenly-spaced posts made of milled lumber bundled together and set on tree stumps support the loft and roof structure. The outer wall studs are 2" x 4" boards on 24" centers. This differs slightly from the structural arrangement offered by the Montana Experiment Station, in a manual published the same year the feature was constructed. The station recommended 2" x 6" studs to provide greater strength against side thrust caused by prevailing winds,⁸ which ranch manager Cory Merrill notes is a problem affecting the stability of the barn today. The barn loft reveals the intricate structural system designed to support the barn, including the extensive bracing at the gambrel. The rafters are 2" x 6", with loft floor joists measuring 2" x 12". The loft features a tongue and groove wood floor.

Very few alterations have been done to the barn since its construction. As noted, the concrete foundation was never undertaken, which is contributing to the barn's current state of deterioration. Further, holes in the roof have allowed

⁵ Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek. *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 44.

⁶ H.E. Murdock, *Farm Buildings*, Bozeman: Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 131, 1926, 13.

⁷ Noble, 48-49.

⁸ Murdock, 17.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 3

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

moisture to damage the barn's interior structural system. In the 1970s, current owner Durl Gibbs placed three cables across the loft, between the north and south walls to buttress the barn's sixteen support posts.

Feature 2 ~ Gravity-flow watering system (c. 1927, one contributing structure)

This small, now dry ditch appears to originate at the pond (feature 3), and travels west approximately 50' from the nearby Naylor Barn (feature 1). The ditch appears to empty into the hay fields located west of the barn and just east of State Highway 191. Based on research, it is likely that this ditch forms the remains of a gravity-flow watering system constructed by the Naylor Brothers, intended for use by sheep housed at the barn.

Feature 3 ~ Man-made pond and dam, (c. 1927, two contributing structures)

This irregularly-shaped feature is located approximately 350' northeast of the Naylor Barn. The creation of this small pond and stone and concrete dam likely dates to the Naylor era of occupation and is connected with the construction of the gravity-flow watering system, known to be constructed by Floyd Naylor. At its widest point, the pond is approximately 140', and the dam is located at the southwest portion of the pond.

Feature 4 ~ Hog & Sheep Barn (c.1917, one contributing building)

This unique feature represents a part of Montana's diversified farming past that is slowly disappearing as farms across the state consolidate crop and livestock production. This building is the Naylor hog barn, located approximately 650' northwest of the Naylor Barn. The 19' x 34', single-story wood-frame building features a semi-monitor roof with slightly overhanging eaves that, in a rural context, is most closely associated by some farm historians with poultry housing⁹. It's historic use as a hog (and sheep) farrowing barn is confirmed by a 1928 image of the barn with sheep in an adjacent fenced pen (since removed).¹⁰ While deteriorating, the feature is largely unchanged from its historic era of use, with its original 4" lapped horizontal wood siding intact. The feature is topped with a peeling, non-original metal roof, and sits on a 10" thick concrete perimeter foundation.

The east (front) elevation features the oddly-angled shape (a partial gable) associated with the semi-monitor roof barn. A large vertical-plank double door, tall and wide enough to accommodate a wagon, is centrally located on the elevation.

The north (side) elevation, though windowless, features six ground-level, side-hinged vertical-plank doors which provided passage for the hogs between the barn and what was once a fenced yard, though no fence remains. It also appears that a door was located near the northwest corner of the feature, but the door has been removed and the opening is partially boarded closed. The original siding has also been removed from this corner and replaced with horizontal wood boards.

The west (rear) portion of the building mirrors the east (front) elevation, with a large vertical-plank double-door, large enough to accommodate a wagon, centrally located along the elevation.

The side (south) elevation features extensive fenestration designed to allow natural light into the interior and to allow for ventilation. A step, located just below the north slope ridge line, forms a vertical surface that contains a ribbon of twenty-four ventilation openings, placed laterally across the length of the upper portion of the elevation. Wooden shutters within the openings, opened or closed from the interior, allowed environmental adaptability depending on outdoor weather conditions. The south slope of the roof extends at an angle from the bottom of the step to the exterior wall. This wall contains extensive fenestration, with twenty wood-framed, window openings immediately below the roofline. Originally, each of the openings contained single four-light windows, similar in size and construction to the windows on the Naylor

⁹ Noble, 136-137.

¹⁰ These images are included in the nomination.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 4

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Barn (feature 1). The window openings are arranged in ribbons, and from west to east are sets of six, two, eight, one, and three. The bottom portion of the elevation features eight wooden openings, enclosed with wooden hinged doors. These openings are spaced evenly along the ground level, again to allow access for the hogs between the barn and what was once a fenced pen.

The interior ground level is divided into three separate, nearly equally-sized spaces which occupy the eastern, central, and western portions of the building. A door provides access between east and center rooms, while the west room is accessed from the exterior and appears to have once provided shelter for a wagon. A shallow loft extends across central and west rooms of the building, with the east room open to the roof structure.

Feature 5 ~ Greenhouse (c.1920, one contributing building)

This simple feature is located approximately 95' to the northwest of the non-contributing main residence (NC-1). This 10' x 24' building was apparently used by the Naylor family (Floyd's spouse Floy Naylor was a noted gardener)¹¹ as a greenhouse which historically featured an open southern exposure that has since been covered by the current owners. Sided with 4" horizontal lapped siding and situated on a concrete foundation, an outhouse is attached to the west elevation. Topped with a northward-sloping shed (or half gable) roof with deteriorating wood shingles, the slight eave overhang extends approximately 1' further from the building to move moisture away from the foundation.

The south (front) elevation once featured an open southern exposure designed to enhance greenhouse production. That framed opening is now covered by corrugated plastic sheets designed to protect the interior of the structure.

The east (side) elevation contains a door on the southern portion of the elevation which is flanked to the north by a wood-frame, four-light sash that is missing its panes.

The north (rear) elevation is covered entirely with wood siding. The west (side) elevation is marked by a 3'6" x 3'6" outhouse, with an entrance on the south elevation. The shed roof orientation of the attached outhouse slopes to the west, while the north elevation features a ground-level opening with allows for the removal of a waste bucket.

The building is currently used for storage.

Feature 6 ~ Bunkhouse (c.1920, one contributing building)

This 18' x 30', single-story, wood-frame, building is located approximately 70' northwest of the greenhouse, and provided housing for ranch employees during the heyday of the Naylor ownership. The cross-gabled building is situated on a concrete pad, and features 3" horizontal wood siding. Wood shingles cover the roof. Originally, the building was "L"-shaped, with an open porch within the ell.

In the 1980s, the 15' x 20' porch was enclosed with new wood framing and plywood siding.¹² The five-panel wood door that served as the original entrance is still visible on the original south elevation within the addition, flanked to the east by an historic-era wood-frame window. The south face of the enclosed porch contains the new entrance to the building, a one-light metal door located along the west end of the enclosure. The west side of the building's south elevation features the original gable-end bay which contains a large, centered, single-pane, wood-frame window.

The east (side) elevation of the building is comprised of both the enclosed porch and the original building. This elevation is immediately attached to the remains of a modern concrete foundation (NC-2) that once supported a log residence (NC-

¹¹ Montana Business Service, *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters: Ubet, Garniell, Straw, Buffalo, Montana*, (Lewistown: 1973) 213.

¹² Cory Merrill, conversation with the Author. Mountain View Ranch, 15 July 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 5

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

6) that was built in the 1980s. This residence has since been relocated and attached to a trailer home (NC-6) on the ranch. Since the relocation, the east elevation has been sided with large wood planks and vertical wood boards.

The north (rear) elevation features two evenly-spaced windows. A wood-framed, double-hung window is located on the east portion of the elevation, while an aluminum-frame, single-pane awning window is centered beneath the gable along the west side. The east side of the elevation is sided with plywood, while the western half of the elevation maintains the historic lapped siding. Interestingly, the east half of the elevation demonstrates exposed rafters, while the west half features a simple, slight eave overhang without brackets that is consistent with the other buildings on the ranch.

The west (side) elevation retains its original lapped siding, but has no fenestration. A stove pipe opening covered with metal flashing remains on the roof's west slope, centrally located near ridgeline.

The building is currently used for storage.

Feature 7 ~ Garage and Shop (c. 1920, one contributing building)

Located approximately 170' northwest of the bunkhouse (feature 6), this building consists of one original bay with a historic shed addition. The original 18' x 20' front-gabled, one and one-half story bay was likely constructed during the Naylor era for use as a garage and vehicle shop, while the feature's loft likely was intended for supplemental hay storage. This portion of the building is clad with 8" horizontal tongue and groove siding. A small gabled 3' x 4' wood shed is attached to the northwest (rear) of this portion of the building. The southwest elevation features a 13' x 18' shed roof historic addition that was also likely built during the Naylor era, and clad with 4" horizontal tongue and groove siding. The entire building sits on a concrete perimeter foundation, and is roofed with wood shingles, with a slight eave overhang.

The southeast (front) elevation of the original bay features a centrally-located ground-level entrance large enough to accommodate a vehicle, though no door remains. Immediately northeast of the door opening is a window opening for two side-by-side single pane windows, though only the wood frame remains. Centered above the door opening is an open hay door frame.

The northeast elevation of the original building has a single wood door near the north corner of the building, while a single window opening, with no window, is present in the center of the elevation. A stove-pipe protrudes from the southeast side of the roof slope.

As noted, the northwest (rear) elevation features a small gabled woodshed. The woodshed features bracketed eaves, a characteristic absent from the main building. The woodshed partially covers a former door opening that mirrors in size the doorway in the front elevation. This would have enabled vehicles to drive through the building. The rest of the former opening is covered with wood planks. A covered hay door is set above the vehicle door opening, just below the gable end. On the northwest elevation of the historic addition, a door opening infilled with tongue-and-groove siding is visible at the west corner.

The historic shed addition runs the entire length of the southwest (side) elevation, and features two window openings, both without sashes.

While the open floor plan of the interior is used for storage today, some elements of the building's historic use remain. Part of a large bellow is present, and a small pit (that is usually covered) is viewable. This would have provided work space for a mechanic underneath a vehicle.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 6

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Feature 8 ~ Blacksmith Shop (c. 1886, one contributing building)

Located approximately 135' southeast of the garage and shop (feature 7), the blacksmith shop is likely the oldest structure on the ranch,¹³ dating to a previous era of occupation. During the 1880s, General Land Office maps and survey notes recorded that Horace Collins owned two buildings, a house and a barn on land located near the center of Section 17. The 15' x 19' blacksmith shop is constructed of hewn logs, unlike any other feature on the Naylor Ranch, so it is likely that the building dates to Horace Collins' previous era of occupation. It is likely that the Collins residence (the interior displays doorways and a window arrangement more consistent with a dwelling than a barn) was moved to its present location within the Naylor's building cluster (now generally at the extreme northeast corner of Section 18 and the southwest corner of Section 7) and converted by the Naylor Brothers into the blacksmith shop. The original cabin fenestration is now covered by 4" wood tongue and groove siding similar to the type used on the other Naylor-era features. Further, it is likely that the Naylor Brothers altered the original roof structure to meet their needs, as the log wall structure ends where walls meets the gabled roof pitch, and a more modern milled lumber roof frame begins. Accordingly, the blacksmith shop features a front gabled, wood shingle roof with a hay door set into north and south gable ends. The building sits on a concrete perimeter foundation.

The south (front elevation) contains a single entrance: a large single sliding door constructed of vertical wood planks. Wood framing supports the metal bar from which the door hangs. The hay door is centered on the elevation, above the door. A metal wind gauge tops the roof ridge, directly above the gable.

The east (side) elevation features two doors both located along the northern half of the elevation. The door just off-center is paneled, while the northernmost door is vertical plank.

The north (rear) elevation features the aforementioned hay door centered in the gable end. The cladding covers two window openings that are spaced evenly along the log building exterior.

The interior reflects the window and door orientation of the original cabin. The north interior wall has two window openings that are boarded over by the cladding. Both are unglazed, but the double-hung, wood frame 2/2 window sashes are present. The interior west elevation features a window opening that is covered by the exterior cladding. The west (side) elevation is featureless.

The structure is currently used for storage.

Because the building was moved within the period of significance, gains its significance for its associations with the Naylor Brothers operation, and is the only building within the district that is moved, it does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B.

Feature 9 ~ Horse Barn (c.1920, one contributing building)

This feature is situated in the center of the historic building cluster, located approximately 95' southwest of the Blacksmith Shop (feature 8). This 35' x 47' horse barn is modeled on the classic Wisconsin Dairy Barn. This type of barn has roots in the upper Midwest, and it is likely that the Naylor family, originally from Illinois and Iowa, brought this Midwestern influence with them to Montana. The feature is clad with vertical 8" wood lap siding, which differs from the siding employed on the Naylor Barn (feature 1). The horse barn's gambrel roof structure features a slight flare at the eaves, a characteristic sometimes referred to as a Dutch roof, and is currently roofed with a non-original metal roof. A prominent, centrally-located metal ridge ventilator, similar to the type on the Naylor Barn, tops the horse barn. Unlike the

¹³ Conversation with Cory Merrill, July 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 7

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Naylor Barn, this feature is situated on a concrete perimeter foundation which supports the structure. A corral and fenced yard is attached to the north portion of the barn.

The east (front elevation) features a similar triangular hay hood used at the Naylor Barn to provide efficient loft access for hay bale storage. The ground floor portion of the elevation is windowless, featuring instead three symmetrically-spaced X-braced Dutch doors—one door is located adjacent to each corner of the elevation. The third door, slightly smaller than the first two, is centered on the elevation.

The south (side) elevation features five windows of the same type employed at the Naylor Barn, and a single Dutch door. One of the single wood-framed, four-light windows is set adjacent to the southwest corner of the structure, with the Dutch door located to the east of the window. A series of four windows of the same design are evenly-spaced east of the door and occupy the rest of the elevation.

The west (rear) of the feature mimics the east elevation with the placement of three evenly-spaced doors. The door located on the northwestern corner has been replaced with a more modern vertical-plank door, while the other two display the Dutch door style of the east elevation. A window opening for light and ventilation is set between the plank door and the centrally-located Dutch door, and it is shuttered with a hinged wooden cover. A single wood-framed, four-light window is set just below the gambrel-end apex to allow natural light into the hay loft.

Finally, the north (side) elevation is connected to the corral, allowing access by the horses between the fenced yard and the barn. This elevation mimics the window arrangement on the opposite elevation, with a large Dutch door allowing movement between the exterior and interior.

The barn's interior retains its historic appearance. The ground floor is divided into two chambers, with a centrally-located and gated passage area separating the sections. The northeast corner of the barn has a stall reserved for the stud, likely the Persheron maintained by Floyd Naylor.¹⁴ This floor also contains feed troughs and ladder access to the loft. The western portion of the barn's interior has been altered to provide equipment storage, but this alteration is not visible from the exterior. The loft is still used to store hay and provides access to the structural system which supports the heavy gambrel roof. The feature maintains its historic use as a horse barn.

Feature 10 ~ Scale Shed and Scales (c. 1917, one contributing building and one contributing structure)

This small, single-story building occupied a place of importance on the Naylor Brothers Ranch. Located 175' west of the Horse Barn, this feature served as the scale for grain shipments destined for the nearby grain elevator (feature 11).

The metal receiving scales, located immediately west of the shed, though deteriorated and overgrown with brush, still display the steel rails that supported the freight to be weighed. The scales were attached to the original Howe Scale which is still located inside the shed.

The shed itself is a 5' x 8', front-gabled building clad with 2" lap siding. Currently roofed with non-original metal sheets, the building sits on a concrete pad. The single door opening contains a vertical plank door and is centrally-set on the southern elevation, while a single sashless window opening on the west (side) elevation overlooks the scales. The rear (north) and side (east) elevations are featureless.

The feature is currently unused. During its era of historic use, vehicles carrying grain would be weighed before proceeding to the grain elevator. Once the grain load was deposited at the elevator, the vehicle would return to the scale. The difference is the net weight of the grain.

¹⁴ Conversation with Cory Merrill, July 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 8

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Feature 11 ~ Grain Elevator (c. 1917, one contributing structure)

This multi-story, irregularly-shaped structure is reputed to be the first privately owned and operated grain elevator in Montana, an uncommon circumstance since most grain elevators were joint ventures whose cost was shared by local farmers and farm cooperatives.¹⁵ No longer in operation, this local landmark is conspicuous in views of this portion of the valley, and was likely constructed by the Naylor Brothers as a response to favorable agricultural conditions which created bountiful grain harvests prior to the beginning of drought in 1919. It is an outstanding reminder of the Golden Era of dry-land farming of the early twentieth century. The feature rests on a 18" thick concrete perimeter foundation, with additional structural support provided by a series of 4" x 4" timbers placed under the central portion of the feature. The siding is in rectangular sections of metal, nailed to the exterior. In some places, the siding is peeling, which reveals the stacked, horizontal arrangement of lumber called cribbing, a construction method common to elevators which allows the walls to withstand the internal pressure formed by the stored grain. Meanwhile, the use of metal siding on elevators is an historical occurrence common to elevators throughout Montana as farmers sought to protect the elevator wood and lower the fire danger inherent with grain elevators.

The elevator consists of three distinct sections: the multi-story grain storage bay to the west; the central, one-story off-loading bay, and the single-story office at the east. The 13' x 29' central section of the elevator was used for off-loading grain, after weighing in at the nearby scale (feature 10). The two 8' x 9' wagon entrances are set at opposite ends of the central section. This central portion is drive through, with a wood board ramp still visible on the southern side of the feature. In the 1980s, the deteriorated boards on the northern side of the feature were removed by the current owner of the ranch, and replaced with an earthen ramp. Overall, this central portion is offset from the grain storage bins (located on the west side of the feature), where the bulk of the central portion extends south, past the southern elevations of both the office and grain storage bins. The roof on the north side of the center portion is an eastward-sloping shed roof, which connects the office section to the grain storage bay. Meanwhile, the roof style on the south side takes a front gable form where the central bay's footprint extends beyond the south elevations of the other bays. The central bay is roofed with metal strips. Fenestration on the central bay is limited to an unglazed 2/2 double-hung, wood frame window off center to the north on the east elevation.

As noted, the 9' x 20' grain elevator office forms the eastern bay of the structure. Its roof is gabled, with the ridge running east-west. A window opening with an unglazed, double-hung, wood-frame window is centered on the north elevation of the office, and this fenestration arrangement is repeated on the office's opposite (south) elevation. A single wood-framed door opening is located on the south side of the office's eastern elevation. No door remains. The office is roofed with metal strips.

The multi-story, 17' x 19' west bay of the structure is quite prominent, containing the three separate grain storage chambers. The upper level of this portion of the structure features a monitor roof arrangement, with a gabled, raised center section rising above the south and north slopes of the main roof. A wood-frame, double-hung window is centrally set under the gable in both the west and east facing elevation of the raised central section, and a small wood frame window opening with an unglazed 4-light, fixed, wood-frame sash is present on the west elevation, below the double-hung window. A small opening, likely for ventilation, is located on both the north and south elevations of the monitor. The monitor roof and north slope of the main roof are topped with wood shingles; the south shed roof is covered with non-original composition shingles over the original wood shingles.

The lower level of the west elevation features the loading spout, which protrudes westward from the elevation and served to load grain into a wagon or grain car after storage in the grain elevator. A wood frame door and 2/2, double-hung wood

¹⁵ Darren Crawford, Fergus County Agricultural Extension Agent, in conversation with the author. August 7, 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 9

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

frame window are located on the north and south sides of the spout, respectively. A crawl space opening is located directly below the spout which provides access to the portion of the spout located within the structure.

The interior of the central portion of the feature shows the pit (or boot) where the grain was emptied into at delivery. From the pit, the grain is elevated to the top of the elevator by the leg—which is essentially a conveyor belt with attached containers that scooped up the grain for deposit in the appropriate bin. Once at the top of the elevator, the grain is dumped into a distributor, which distributes the grain to the selected bin. The operator chose the appropriate bin and moved the grain distributor accordingly. To ship grain, the operator re-elevated the grain to the distributor that directs the grain to the loading spout, and into the vehicle for shipment.

All of these interior features, including the pit, the levers and wheels required to operate the leg and distributors, and the separate grain bins are intact in the Naylor grain elevator.

Feature 12 ~ Machine Shed (c. 1920, one contributing building)

This severely deteriorated building is believed to be the machine shed that was used by the Naylor Brothers to store farm equipment.¹⁶ This 35' x 60' low pitch front gabled structure is without a foundation, and is clad in places with deteriorating corrugated metal sheets which are peeling away from the structure to reveal the original horizontal wood board siding.

The west (front) elevation is dominated by a large, single sliding wagon door located on the north side of the elevation. The right (or south) half of the same door opening is open, and the door is missing. Two equally-spaced wood-frame window openings are located above the entrance, the north side window is sheltered with a plastic cover, while the south side window opening is uncovered.

The north (side) elevation is without fenestration, and a portion of the wall in the middle of the elevation appears to have collapsed. The east (rear) elevation features a door opening on the north side large enough to accommodate vehicles, though the sliding wagon door is missing. Two evenly-spaced window openings are located below the gable. The south (side) elevation is featureless, displaying a mix of peeling metal siding and exposed wooden boards.

Contributing Sites

Approximately 1200 Acres of Agricultural Fields (one contributing site)

Contributing to the historic setting, feeling, and association of the ranch is 1200 acres of naturally-watered wild hay fields which surround the historic building cluster. These lands comprise the rest of the historic ranch lands as assembled by 1912, and today's intact agricultural use demonstrates the continuity of use since the establishment of the Naylor Brothers Ranch in c. 1909.

Non-Contributing Elements

Single Family Main Residence (NC-1, one non-contributing building)

The main residence was constructed by Floyd Naylor in 1915, and consisted of a six-room dwelling, full basement, central heating and running water. Its simple floor plan was essentially rectangular, with a hipped roof and concrete foundation.¹⁷

¹⁶ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 212.

¹⁷ County of Fergus Tax Assessor Office, "Residential Data Collection Form for 503 E. Dry Creek Road," Viewed at the Fergus County Tax Assessor Office, July 17, 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 10

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

However, the appearance of the dwelling has been altered as a result of modern day alterations to the historic residence. The front (south) elevation was altered by the addition of a new entrance, which is attached to a non-original open, wood-frame porch. The original windows have been replaced by a combination of vinyl and aluminum frame windows. The original roof has been replaced by a modern metal roof, and the original horizontal wood siding has been replaced by horizontal masonite siding. Given these alterations, the dwelling no longer resembles its historic predecessor, and as such does not qualify as a contributing element for National Register purposes.

Concrete Foundation Remains (NC-2, one non-contributing site)

The rectangular, 24' x 48' concrete foundation for the 1986 log residence is still present, located adjacent to the bunkhouse. The foundation was poured in 1986 when the building was constructed,¹⁸ and is not associated with the Naylor Brothers tenure at the ranch, and therefore is counted as a non-contributing resource.

Quonset Building (NC-3, one non-contributing building)

The 40' x 100' metal Quonset structure was built in 1977.¹⁹ The structure is used for storage and vehicle maintenance. As the structure is less than 50 years old and does not possess extraordinary historic value, it is considered a non-contributing element for National Register purposes.

Four Metal Storage Silos (NC-4 and NC-5, four non-contributing structures)

The round metal storage silos are in two pairs located in the historic building cluster. The silos were built in 1979, and are currently used for storage. As structures that are less than 50 years old and are not associated with the period of significance, they are considered non-contributing resources in the district.²⁰

Mobile Home Residence with attached Cabin (NC-6, one non-contributing building)

This Grizzly mobile home was built in 1980, and the attached garage was built in 1983.²¹ In 1993, the log residence, then located immediately adjacent to the bunkhouse (feature 6), was attached to the trailer. The 24' x 48' log residence itself was constructed in 1986.²² As the building as a whole is all less than 50 years old and is not associated with the period of significance for the Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District, it is counted as a non-contributing resource.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ County of Fergus Tax Assessor Office.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 11

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Integrity:

The Naylor Brothers Ranch clearly retains excellent integrity, which is best reflected in its essentially unchanged rural location, intact architectural material, and continuity of use. The setting and feeling of the property is much as it was during its period of significance from c.1909 to 1931. Further, the historic ranch's contributing resources maintain their original sites, as only a single feature on the ranch may have been moved onto the ranch from an adjacent location during the historic era. The overall setting, near Dry Creek and at the foot of the Big Snowy Mountains, provides a historic backdrop to the ranch that reveals the retained overall historic rural and agricultural character of property. Additionally, the surrounding countryside is essentially unaltered by new, non-agricultural development, and the existing adjacent ranches only contribute to the overall integrity of the landscape.

The quality of design, materials, and workmanship throughout the ranch's historic features has also been maintained. Generally, original concrete foundations, wood siding, windows, doors, ventilators, and interior framing have survived unchanged. While some deterioration has affected the aesthetic value of the historic features, the stability of the structures appears to remain intact. However, one significant exception to this is the Naylor Barn (feature 1), which has deteriorated to such a point that structural stability is in question. Current ranch ownership appreciates the severity of the deterioration, and is planning to rehabilitate the barn in a historically sensitive manner. While metal roofs have been added to some contributing features such as the Horse Barn and Grain Elevator, the changes do not overtly diminish the integrity of the barns, as no other alterations appear to have occurred. Overall, the property's ability seemingly to transcend time to articulate its associated historic era is perhaps the property's strongest overall attribute.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 12

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Cultural Setting

Native American Occupation

Prior to Euro-American contact, several American Indian tribes used the north central region of present-day Montana as both a thoroughfare for intertribal trade and seasonal hunting grounds. Known major tribal groups that maintained traditional ties to the area include the Crow²³, the Blackfeet, and to a lesser extent, the Gros Ventre. The homelands of these tribes overlapped in the area between the Missouri and Mussleshell Rivers, making the Judith Basin a cultural meeting ground for regional tribes.

Within the recent pre-contact and historic period and until forced to reservations, the Crow held most of an immense territory. Crow homeland came to encompass a large area in north and central Wyoming, as well as much of eastern and central Montana. Stretching east to west from the Three Forks region to the current Montana-North Dakota border and north to south from the Milk River to the North Platte, Crow land included mountains, valleys, plains, and river systems, offering different climates and food sources throughout the year.²⁴

Meanwhile, the Blackfeet held most of the territory stretching from the North Saskatchewan River, Canada, to the headwaters of the Missouri in today's Montana Fifty years before Lewis and Clark, the Blackfeet Indians had a reputation of being hospitable to European traders, such the Hudson Bay Company, who occasionally even wintered with the tribe.²⁵ The Blackfeet were regular commerce partners with Canadian-based British merchants, and this relationship had lasted more than twenty years, and during that time, the Blackfeet—using firearms—successfully dominated their regional rivals.²⁶

The smaller Gros Ventre tribe occupied areas north of Crow homeland, into what is now southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan.²⁷ In the late 1700s, the tribe, like the Crow, became active traders, and entered into a commercial relationship with the European Hudson's Bay Company. Competition for trade increased tribal rivalries, and though the tribe was allied with the powerful Blackfeet nation, they began to suffer from attacks from the Cree and Assiniboine. The tribe was also severely weakened by small pox epidemics in 1780-81 and 1801-02.²⁸

The various tribal movements through the region made the area important for trade, into which the Crow quickly established themselves. The arrival of horses in the mid-eighteenth century had large repercussions for Crow culture. Horses became the basis for wealth and power for individuals; they made hunting more efficient and allowed for the transportation of more of the meat following a hunt, and they transformed the Crow into formidable mounted warriors.²⁹ Crow trade, although centered in the Montana/Wyoming area, essentially linked them to both sides of the continent, a comment on the extensive Indian trade networks.³⁰ The region, then, and the associated large-scale waterways of the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers, formed a portion of the critical transportation corridors that maintained thriving Crow trade networks.

²³ Raymond J. DeMallie, ed, *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 13, Plains*. Parts 1 and 2. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001) 694.

²⁴ DeMallie, "Crow," 696.

²⁵ DeMallie, "Blackfeet," 405.

²⁶ DeMallie, "Blackfeet," 406.

²⁷ Demallie, "Gros Ventre," 677.

²⁸ Ibid, 677.

²⁹ Ibid, "Crow," 695.

³⁰ Ibid, "Crow," 696.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 13

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

The Blackfeet initially opposed the American fur trappers who followed Lewis and Clark, and successfully resisted attempts by Americans to open fur trade outposts in their country. Finally, in 1832, the American Fur Company opened an outpost, Fort Piegan, on the Missouri River near the mouth of the Marias River. By then, the Blackfeet tempered their dislike for these intruders, enjoying the goods that traders offered. Besides access to trade, The Blackfeet ranged widely throughout the Missouri country utilizing the region's resources. In 1853, famed road-builder Lt. John Mullan wrote that "The Judith mountains were a great resort for the Blackfeet Indians during the summer season as game of all kinds was found in abundance, and here, too they procured poles for their travel and lodges while their old camping grounds were to be seen everywhere,"³¹

Relations with the traders deteriorated when the Gros Ventre came to view the Europeans as allies of their enemies. Clashes with traders, as well as continued conflict with the Cree and Assiniboine, worsened their condition, and by the early 1800s the tribe was moving south. By 1830, the Gros Ventre established a territory that stretched from southern Canada's "Cypress Hills to the Judith River and Bear Paw Mountains...down the Missouri and the Musselshell rivers on the east."³² After this relocation, relations with traders improved. Beginning in 1831, the tribe traded peacefully with the American Fur Company outposts on the Missouri River, where the tribe grew rich in horses and goods.

As the nineteenth century unfolded, the once plentiful bison herds became increasingly scarce as more non-Indians moved into Montana, forcing tribes to withdraw further into core homelands and away from outlying seasonal hunting grounds and extended trade networks. The mid-to-late nineteenth century discoveries of gold in western and central Montana attracted thousands of white settlers to the region and the impact was felt by all tribes throughout Montana. Non-Indian settlement continued and inter-tribal power shifted and weakened.

In an 1880 agreement, the Crow sold over 1,500,000 acres to the United States Government and moved in 1883-84 to the present Crow Reservation in southeastern Montana. The Gros Ventre endured their own territorial loss. In one 1855 treaty with the United States, the Gros Ventre agreed to allow military posts and travel in their country. Americans began to settle into the upper Missouri country in increasing numbers, especially in and around Fort Benton. While the Gros Ventre and US Army were never in direct conflict, pressure to confine native peoples to small areas grew. A series of Executive Orders reduced Indian lands, and as buffalo declined, the Gros Ventre traveled more regularly to Fort Belknap for supply. In 1890, the tribe was placed on a reduced reservation with some bands of Assiniboine, at today's Fort Belknap Reservation, located immediately south of the Milk River, and north of the Missouri River in north central Montana.

The population was drastically reduced by a small pox epidemic in 1781, and between 1785 and 1805 large numbers of Blackfeet were killed in battles over hunting territory. An 1837 smallpox epidemic killed nearly 6,000 Blackfeet, an estimated two-thirds of the total population.³³ However, the Blackfeet maintained their traditional way of life based on hunting bison, until the near extinction of the bison by 1881 forced them to adapt their ways of life in response to the effects of territory and resource loss. The tribe was restricted to land assigned in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, but this attempt to designate Blackfeet hunting territory failed when white settlers began taking the reserved land. In 1870, American soldiers attacked the camp of the peaceful Piegan Blackfeet leader Heavy Runner. Over 200 Blackfeet were killed during what became known as the Massacre on the Marias River. The Blackfeet did not retaliate and in 1888 those Blackfeet residing in Montana were placed on a 3,000 square-mile reservation in northwest Montana, under the terms of the 1888 Sweet Grass Hills Treaty.

³¹ C.B. Worthen, *The History of Central Montana to 1871*, (Unknown publisher, 1915) 7.

³² Demallie, "Gros Ventre," 678.

³³ D'Azevedo, "Shoshone," 517.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 14

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Regional Historic Context

The region now known as Fergus County was originally part of the French and Spanish colony of Louisiana, acquired by the United States through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. It remained part of the Territory of Louisiana until 1812 when it was included in the newly organized Territory of Missouri. These lands were later included in the Dakota Territory, organized in 1861. Later still, when gold was discovered throughout the region the area was included within the limits of Idaho Territory. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill creating Montana Territory, which included today's Fergus County. At that time, the county was part of Meagher County, and the county seat at White Sulphur Springs, located approximately 200 miles west of fledgling regional settlements. Fergus County was formally organized in 1886, while Montana was still a territory. The state formally entered the Union in 1889.³⁴

The first Euro-American explorers believed to have entered what would become Montana was the de la Verendrye Expedition, who in 1743 followed Missouri River westward, where they viewed the "Shining Mountains" (perhaps the Big Horns of southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming) on the western horizon. Approximately sixty years later, the American expedition Corps of Discovery, led by Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, passed through north central Montana, again along the Missouri River in 1805 and during their 1806 return to the United States.

For the following several decades, the Missouri River remained the primary form of travel for the fur traders which entered the area seeking beaver pelts. During this formative period, Euro-American fur trappers began to establish a foothold along the Missouri River to further economic aims. In 1822, Fort Union (then Fort Floyd) was completed near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, and trappers used this post as a base to gradually penetrate the upstream corridor. In 1831, James Kipp of the American Fur Company constructed Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias River in order to conduct trade with the Blackfeet people who controlled the region.³⁵ While this fort only lasted one season, it inspired a series of forts over the coming years. The American Fur Company's outpost at Fort Benton opened for business in 1846, and soon rose to prominence as the head of navigation on the Missouri River.³⁶

In 1858, gold was first discovered in Montana on Gold Creek, in the northern portion of Deer Lodge Valley, and 1862's monumental Alder Gulch gold rush led to the establishment of the town of Bannack, near today's Virginia City, MT, where hundreds of miners began the search for the prized metal. An 1863 territorial poll recorded the total population of the massive territory at 32,342 with 11,043 people alone were counted in Montana, with most crowded along the diggings in western Montana. This and other discoveries transformed Fort Benton, hurt by the dying fur trade, into a bustling port and supply center. Steamboats first docked at the fort in 1860, and new roads connected the outpost with regional mining centers. By 1865, the American Fur Company ended its Fort Benton business interest, and the town settled into a role as a supplier to the mining industry and infant agricultural settlements.

While Euro-American expansion in north central Montana continued along the Missouri, settlement moved at a slower pace inland. Until 1873, all of the land north of the Musselshell River generally remained in tribal hands. Most of the new settlements that stretched inland were centered near the diggings in the western portion of today's Montana, but following the defeat of the Nez Perce in 1877, the United States Government established the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation at the Milk River Indian Reservation to maintain a permanent military presence designed to control the native population of the area.

³⁴ R.L. Polk & Co.'s *Fergus County Directory, 1922-23*, 181-184.

³⁵ As quoted in Bureau of Land Management, *Class III Cultural Resource Inventory*. (Report #02-MT-066-011, 2002), 20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 15

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

The cultural composition of the region began to shift with the influx of military personnel and the discovery of gold in the Sweet Grass Hills region in the early-1870s. In 1873, the United States began reducing and dividing Indian lands in northern Montana, opening most of the original Milk River reservation to white settlement.

The newcomers sought to take advantage of the lands north of the Musselshell as they opened for settlement. Nelson Story, prominent in the settlement of late-nineteenth century Montana, built a trading post near the site of today's Lewistown in 1873, and that same year, the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Bismarck, North Dakota. While the railroad's westward expansion was stalled for years by deteriorating national economic conditions in the 1870s, the Bismarck terminus generated increased steamboat traffic on the Missouri. After moving livestock through the portal of the Sun River, enterprising ranchers spread into the Smith River Valley and then north and east, laying claim to the lands of central Montana. By the late 1870s, cattlemen moved into the rolling valleys of the upper Musselshell and the Judith Basin, where deep loamy soils and protein-rich prairie grasses awaited the first farmers and ranchers to ride herd over these ranges. Montana pioneer Granville Stuart remarked in 1879 on the "magnificent bunch grass" but found it "too open and exposed for a cattle range," declared it instead to be "splendid farming country."³⁷ Pushing the boundaries were stockmen like Frank Chamberlain, H. P. Brooks, T. C. Power and J.H. McKnight who moved into today's Fergus County. In 1877, rancher Frank Chamberlain moved the first substantial amounts of cattle into today's Fergus County, establishing his herd along today's McDonald Creek.³⁸

Most of these early stockmen established themselves on the abundant open range between the Missouri and the Musselshell, and by the mid-1880s cattle raising had increased to such a point that one regional newspaper editorialized that "there seem to be cattle not only on a thousand hills, but a thousand cattle on each hill."³⁹ During that same time, Granville Stuart reported that the north central Montana country "went from being practically uninhabited to one where small ranches could be found along all streams and where settlements were springing up all over the range."⁴⁰ By 1885, regional stockman's associations handled over 125,000 head of cattle.

Meanwhile, sheep outfits moved into the Judith Basin in the mid-1870s. Several sheep companies settled in the Judith Basin by the 1880s, exemplified by J.H. Severance who maintained 11,000 sheep on a range of over 70 miles. Charles Messiter, a British sportsman who had hunted in the Judith Basin, returned to the region in 1884 and "found the whole of it a mass of sheep ranches..."⁴¹ Near the end of the 1890s, nearly 500,000 sheep ranged throughout Fergus County, and wool production was the region's most important enterprise.⁴²

But this growth would not last long. Poor rainfall in the early summer of 1886 followed by the ruinous "Hard Winter" devastated Montana's cattle herds. The extreme cold and heavy snows killed an estimated 362,000 head of cattle across Montana territory,⁴³ and Fergus County ranchers lost an estimated 85% of their cattle herds.⁴⁴ Sheep outfits enjoyed much higher survival rates, as the hearty herds benefited from backcountry shelters.

The open range cattle industry never recovered from the Hard Winter of 1886, and combined with growing population pressure on public lands, cattle gave way to sheep and, increasingly, to farmers. Sheep populations continued to increase

³⁷ As quoted in Joan L. Brownell, *Cultural Resource Inventory, Judith Gap-Glengarry 100 KV Transmission Line*, (Butte: The Montana Power Company, 1989) 23.

³⁸ BLM, 22.

³⁹ As quoted in BLM, 21.

⁴⁰ Ibid., as quoted on p. 22.

⁴¹ As quoted in Brownell, 22.

⁴² Ibid, 22.

⁴³ Jim Jenks, *A Guide to Historic Bozeman* (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2007) 25.

⁴⁴ BLM, 22.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 16

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

and by 1898, the county sheep population was almost 500,000 and wool production was the most significant industry in Fergus County. By 1900, Montana was first in the nation in wool production.⁴⁵

In the 1880s and into the 1890s, the town of Ubet (pronounced you-bet) prospered as a stage hub, and today's State Highway 191, which travels north-south adjacent to today's historic ranch, is located just west of a historic road known as the Maiden & Ubet Road, as noted on the 1886 General Land Office survey map of the area. This road was first surveyed by the United States Army in 1869, as it sought to expand its influence on the northern plains in the aftermath of Red Cloud's War, a period of hostilities between Lakota Sioux bands and the United States that lasted from 1866 to 1868. In the early 1870s, that same road later rose to some degree of fame as the Carroll Trail.

In the early 1870s, the small village of Carroll, really just a collection of wood huts, had hopes of replacing Fort Benton as the head of navigation on the Missouri River. It was the short-lived brainstorm of enterprising promoters and merchants from Helena, MT who sought to shorten the distance and lessen the costs of freight from Fort Benton, then Montana's shipping center. While the distance between Fort Benton and Helena was 140 miles and the distance between Carroll and the future Capitol was 70 miles further, the Carroll Road was advertised as much less difficult to travel, saving an estimated ten days. Steamboats could also get to Carroll more quickly, given that Benton was further upriver.⁴⁶

Low water on the Missouri in 1874 and 1875 made Carroll an attractive port, but freighters soon discovered that the Carroll Road's had a distinct disadvantage. Gumbo-mud roads made travel incredibly laborious. In their 1875 geological report of the route, Edward S. Dana and George Bird Grinnell, an early Montana ethnographer wrote that "[W]hen thoroughly wetted, it [the road] becomes a fathomless mass of clinging mud, through which straining animals can hardly drag the heavily weighted wheels."⁴⁷

Further, Lakota Sioux warriors took advantage of the feeble protection provided by the over-stretched U.S. Army along the route, with bloodshed and horse-stealing a growing occurrence. High water in 1876 allowed most steamboats to continue to Fort Benton's better port facilities, and the Carroll Trail was left completely unprotected when most troops took to the field when the Great Sioux War erupted in southeastern Montana. Except for local traffic, the Carroll Trail never revived, and in 1881, most of the town of Carroll was washed away by Missouri River flooding.⁴⁸ According to 1886 General Land Office maps of the area, the Maiden & Ubet Road (the Carroll Road) passed directly through the intersection of Sections 7,8,17, and 19, where today's historic building cluster on the Naylor Brothers Ranch is located.⁴⁹ No visible traces of the road remain on a landscape that has been thoroughly plowed and tilled for over a century.

Another form of nineteenth century transportation, the railroad, remained out of reach of Judith Basin residents. By 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad (NP) stretched across Montana after a decade of delay, but those tracks were almost one hundred miles to the south. In 1898, the Montana Agricultural Report noted that the "only hindrance to the full development of diversified industries and resources [in Fergus County] is the lack of railway facilities"⁵⁰

In 1902, the Montana Railroad (purchased in 1908 by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad) began construction of a line from Harlowton, located 28 miles south of the Naylor Ranch, to Lewistown, the county seat of government located approximately 30 miles northeast of the ranch. This system passed the ranch, but it was not until 1908 that James J. Hill

⁴⁵ Brownell, 22.

⁴⁶ Michael J. Koury, *Guarding the Carroll Trail and Camp Lewis, 1874-1875*. (Fort Collins: The Old Army Press, 1985) 9.

⁴⁷ Lee Silliman, "The Carroll Trail: Utopian Enterprise," in *Montana the Magazine of Western History*. Spring 1974, (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press) 7.

⁴⁸ Silliman, 17.

⁴⁹ General Land Office, *Survey Map of Township 12 North, Range 16 East, Montana Territory*, 1886.

⁵⁰ Brownell, 23.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 17

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

of the Great Northern Railway (GN) constructed a route through the basin which built local towns such as Buffalo, located only five miles west of the ranch, and increased prosperity. The presence of rail lines generally stimulated economic and population growth wherever they appeared throughout Montana, and the Judith Basin was no exception.

Dry land wheat farming began in Fergus County in 1904.⁵¹ Dry land simply means farming without irrigation in semi-arid conditions. For successful dry land crop production, a minimum of 18 inches of rainfall annually is required, and Fergus County averages nearly exactly that minimum. It is that required minimum rain and the moisture it creates, rather than soil quality that most effects dry land farming.⁵²

Small quantities of wheat were produced in the region beginning in the early-1880s, generally along bottomlands where water was more plentiful. In this period, farmers were convinced that wheat production without irrigation was impossible, so it follows that the earliest settlers chose land along creek bottoms. When these rich lands became less available, settlers sought land on surrounding foothills near mountains, where the absence of streams was somewhat compensated by increased precipitation.

So it was that by the turn of the twentieth century, the only land left unsettled were the broad, level, and dry benchlands. Here, dry-land production was first attempted in the region by farmers who took out land in 1904. These farmers applied new dry-land techniques pioneered at the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, located in Bozeman at the Montana Agricultural College, established in 1893. Production increased as farmers gained greater skill in preserving moisture in the soil. However, some early techniques, such as the deeper depth of the plow in the soil, ultimately contributed to soil erosion which had catastrophic consequences for farmers in the 1920s and 1930s.

This method of wheat cultivation on Fergus County's waterless, plowed and tilled benchland was initially successful. In 1906, the *Fergus County Democrat* reported that "During the last two or three years some excellent crops have been raised upon the bench, and as a result every foot of land has been taken up and the greater part of it will be sown in grain this year."⁵³ In 1904, 5,000 acres were placed under cultivation and by 1907 that number had increased to 20,000. By 1910, 61,000 acres of benchland were planted with wheat.⁵⁴

The growth of dry-land farming also helped effect change in the nation's public land laws. Federal land provisions proved vastly inadequate because much more land than was patented to the settler was needed to support the farmer or rancher. In 1877, Congress passed the Desert Land Act which entitled homesteaders to 640 acres. On the Naylor property, the portions of the ranch established by the Absalom Hays family used the Desert Land Act to patent the land.⁵⁵ But in 1891, this Act was revised and the amount of allowable acreage was set at only 320. The original Homestead Act was altered in 1909, boosting the amount of land allowed under the law from 160 acres to 320 acres.

Railroad magnets, especially the GN's James J. Hill, used land laws to encourage settlements on Montana's northern plains. In the Judith Basin, the homestead rush coincided with the 1908 construction of the GN through the region and the marketing by the GN of dry-land farming. That year, 1,176 160-acre homestead patents were filed, and increase of 50 percent from the previous, railroad-less year.⁵⁶ Hill became an ardent supporter of dry-land farming and homestead settlement, as long as settlers paid to use his railroad to go west. As one sympathetic historian of the GN described,

⁵¹ Anna Zellick, *A History of Fergus County from 1879 to 1915*, 1943, M.A. Thesis. Chapter VI, 1. This is an informative overview of early dry-land farming in Fergus County.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Chp. VI, 8.

⁵³ As quoted in Zellick, Chp. VI, 3.

⁵⁴ Zellick, Chp. VI, 3

⁵⁵ Realty and Abstract Company, *Abstract of Title*. (Lewistown: Date of Compilation Unknown) 4.

⁵⁶ Brownell, 27.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 18

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

“Beginning in 1908 [the same year the GN route near the ranch was completed], the GN aimed a spectacular colonization program at Montana. Immigration agents visited scores of state and county fairs...with literature and lectures that carefully explained federal land laws and announced state land sales and the opening of Indian lands...[M]ost effort was aimed at settling the rolling benchlands in eastern and northern Montana.”⁵⁷ And Hill himself stated that “Montana, in my judgment, will be the greatest grain growing state in the Union...we know there are thousands of sturdy, brainy and enterprising men of moderate means in the overcrowded East who are eager for just such an opportunity as is afforded in Montana.”⁵⁸

The results of Hill’s campaign were impressive. Between 1900 and 1910, Fergus County’s population ballooned from just under 7,000 to over 17,000 people.⁵⁹ For cash poor immigrants, wheat was irresistible. Livestock required a large capital investment, but wheat was viewed as a quick cash crop. No doubt, dry-land production in this era was aided by the fact that from 1907 to 1918, annual precipitation substantially exceeded the average, and throughout Fergus County, dry-land farming replaced livestock production.⁶⁰ Railroad and real estate firms played a large part in this development by purchasing large sheep ranches and subdividing them into 160-acre parcels, which they then sold to hopeful settlers.⁶¹ Often, these settlers signed mortgages with the burgeoning number of local banks.

During these boom years, prosperity and optimism reigned. Favorable weather and ample rainfall created fine farming conditions and phenomenal crop yields. However, drought began in 1917, with 1919 recorded as the driest year in Montana’s recorded history. The drought hit hardest in the eastern two-thirds of the state, including Fergus County. The effects of the drought were exacerbated by grasshoppers, and high wind increased prairie fires and soil erosion.⁶²

The drought precipitated general economic collapse. Indeed, America’s rural depression began over a decade before the beginning of the Great Depression in 1932. Countywide, by 1922, only 369 original homestead entries were made and by 1925, that number dropped to a mere 72.⁶³ Mirroring this trend was the number of banks in the region. By 1920, there were eighty-five banks in north central Montana, serving a population of approximately 38,000 people. This bank to customer ratio was over seven times the national average, a trend that was simply unsustainable, and which demonstrates the intense amount of regional land speculation. With the exception of the 1924 wheat crop, wheat prices steadily declined. In Montana, one out of every two farmers lost their land to foreclosure, another unfortunate historic characteristic exhibited by the Naylor Brothers Ranch. In the Judith Basin alone, sixteen banks collapsed in 1927, while the local First Bank of Buffalo had already closed its doors in 1923.⁶⁴ By 1924, not a single bank remained open in Lewistown.⁶⁵ During that year and in 1928, climatic conditions improved marginally, though many farmers slid further into debt as they purchased more land in an attempt to make up previous losses. Then in 1929, another drought cycle began.

The Dust Bowl and the Great Depression of the 1930s descended on an already tattered landscape, compounding the rural depression of the 1920s. Between 1929 and 1934, American agricultural commodities dropped an average of 40 percent, while industrial prices fell only 15 percent. Federal aid poured into Montana, but still the dry-land farming counties of

⁵⁷ Ralph W. Hidy, *The Great Northern Railway: A History*. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988), 102.

⁵⁸ BLM, 25.

⁵⁹ U.S. Federal Census, 1910. Viewable at www2.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1910.htm.

⁶⁰ Brownell, 42.

⁶¹ Zellick Chp. VI, 17.

⁶² BLM, 27.

⁶³ Brownell, 43.

⁶⁴ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 136.

⁶⁵ BLM, 27.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 19

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

north and eastern Montana lost huge amounts of their population. Overall, Montana received the second most New Deal support of any state in the nation.⁶⁶

As regional farming and ranching practices and demographics shifted with the turmoil of the 1920s and 1930s, so too did other facets of life. People left the country for nearby towns. Lewistown, for example, enjoyed a 10 percent population boost during the 1930s, and even higher growth rates during World War II. State and federal governments also instituted a variety of programs aimed at rural recovery. Local irrigation projects sought to stabilize water supplies and in 1937, the New Deal agency Farm Security Administration began the Northern Montana Land Use and Resettlement Project, organized to rehabilitate the land. Further, New Deal federal Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Project Administration (WPA) provided employment for the desperate worker.

The arrival of World War II brought economic recovery to Montana, though the rural population never reached the density of the Golden Age of the early century. Since that time, small-scale farming operations have been generally eliminated by larger farm acreages, with today's ranches averaging well over 2,000 acres. Farmers have overwhelmingly mechanized their operations in response to technological innovations and market demands. Ranchers have organized cooperative grazing organizations to work with federal and state agencies, and augment private holdings by leasing range rights. Further, agricultural production has become less diverse, with most farms and ranches concentrating on hay production and cattle, with some wheat production in valley bottoms—a small repetition of early historic wheat production practices.⁶⁷ Changes in the wool and mutton markets brought an end to large-scale sheep production. And since the late-1960s, many farm family incomes are supplemented by off-farm employment for at least one family member.

Local Historic Context

The development of the Naylor Brothers Ranch is most closely linked to the growth of the small village of Buffalo. Buffalo, located five miles west of the ranch, was established in 1908 on what was then the Shiell Ranch, when James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway (GN) was constructed, and it grew as homesteaders poured into the region via the GN and other railways. As one former resident wrote romantically of Buffalo's beginnings, "Ribbons of steel, resting heavily on cross ties brought Buffalo in existence eight years following the turn of the century in time to fulfill its predestined purpose of serving as a trading center for the surrounding homesteaders who occupied the "free" [sic] land that had been parceled out by Uncle Sam in 160 acre lots..."⁶⁸

Buffalo, during its World War I-era zenith when wheat and wool commodities peaked, was a small cluster of buildings along a single, three-block long Main Street that was adjacent to the north-south running GN line. Then, the town included a pool hall, barber shop, two garages, land office, drugstore, Odd Fellows hall, hotel, two general stores, Methodist Church, and a hardware store, as well as two masonry buildings, the Buffalo School and the First Bank of Buffalo, which closed in 1923 when foreclosures began to sweep across the plains. As one Buffalo resident recalled, bank failures "[H]it us hard. They'd [nearby banks] made loans based on high World War I prices and just couldn't come out when prices dropped."⁶⁹ When Floyd Naylor first came to the region, he worked at one of the Buffalo general stores and was a teller at the local bank, while his sister Winnie was Buffalo's first school teacher. Meanwhile, the organization and

⁶⁶ BLM, 28-29.

⁶⁷ Crawford, in conversation with the Author, August 7, 2008.

⁶⁸ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 136.

⁶⁹ As quoted in Ken Byerly, *Central Montana Communities: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, (Lewistown: Central Montana Publishing Co, 1980) 16.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 20

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

construction of the Methodist Church, the first in Buffalo, was due in large part to Edmund Naylor, a devout man and father of Floyd Naylor.

The GN was Buffalo's single largest taxpayer and maintained the largest payroll in town, including the telegrapher, section crew, pumper, agent, ticket dispenser and freight agent. The GN facilities began on the north side of town and included the section house and storage facilities. Stockyards occupied the east portion of the tracks, while the depot was on the west side. Three grain elevators lined the east side of the GN tracks, and one early resident recalled that "[T]he elevator scene was the busy one on the early Twenties [sic] when every wheat raiser started to haul the year's crop..."⁷⁰

Buffalo's population peaked at 250 immediately following World War I, but declined thereafter. One 1927 local history placed the population at 100⁷¹, and by the 1970s, the official population of the town had dropped to 4. In an assessment of modern Buffalo, one local resident wrote in 1971 that "The Buffalo State Bank's brick embedded sign alone remains to attest that the cluster of rundown, unpainted, dilapidated buildings ever formed a part of an active, well-planned and guided community life."⁷²

Unfortunately, that statement remains true. A few inhabited homes and the well-maintained Methodist Church (today a community church) still dot the townsite. The brick bank and two-story brick schoolhouse also remain, as does the wood frame community hall, though all are unused and in an extreme state of deterioration. The prairie has reclaimed the eastern portion of Buffalo's Central Avenue, though the general store that once employed Floyd Naylor still stands. This street led to the GN's facilities, which have since been removed, as have two of the three grain elevators. Rail track, owned today by the Burlington, Northern, and Santa Fe (BNSF) still traverses the land east of the old townsite, but the train no longer stops in Buffalo.

The History of the Naylor Brothers Ranch

The historic building cluster constructed by Floyd Naylor is located in Township 12 North, Range 16 East, Section 17, which was first known to be occupied by Horace A. Collins, whose homestead patent was recorded in 1891. However, Collins is earlier noted on the 1886 General Land Office map of the ranch area, and two buildings, the Collins house and barn, are shown on the map in the SW1/4 of the NE1/4 of Section 17.⁷³ By 1894, the land was patented by William E. Doores. Doores was the son of James and Abigail Doores, who moved with their seven children from Missouri to Montana in 1889, and settled in the Ubet area.

According to Bureau of Land Management patent records, Doores apparently acquired 160 acres in Section 17 through a preemption patent.⁷⁴ The 1841 Preemption Act used by Doores was passed by Congress in response to the demands of the Western states that squatters be allowed to preempt lands. Immigrants often settled on public lands before they could be surveyed and auctioned by the U.S. government. At first the squatter claims were not recognized, but in 1830 Congress passed the first of a series of temporary preemption laws. Opposition to preemption came from Eastern states, which saw any encouragement of western migration as a threat to their labor supply. A permanent preemption act was passed only after the Eastern states had been placated by the principle of distribution, where the proceeds of the government land sales would be distributed among the states according to population, a remedy which clearly favored the East. Distribution was discarded in 1842, but preemption survived. The act of 1841 permitted settlers to stake a claim of 160 acres and after a

⁷⁰ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 140.

⁷¹ Wyllys A. Hedges, Mrs., *History of Fergus County, MT* (Lewistown: Lewistown Women's Club, 1927) 22.

⁷² *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 144.

⁷³ George Stafford, *Field Notes of the Subdivision Lines of Township 12N, Range 16E of the Principal Meridian, Montana Territory*, (Washington D.C.: General Land Office, 1886)

⁷⁴ *Abstract*, 41.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 21

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

year of residence to purchase it from the government for as little as \$1.25 an acre before it was offered for public sale. After the passage of the 1862 Homestead Act, the value of preemption for bona fide settlers declined, and the practice became a tool for speculators. Doores may have used “squatter’s rights” associated with the use of the preemption law to acquire the land at \$1.25 per acre, as the law prescribed.

In 1903, Absalom T. Hays took ownership of the land through a Desert Land Act patent, as recorded in 1905. This supplemented Hays’ previous holdings, which included portions of the adjacent sections 7 and 18, both acquired through cash entry patents.⁷⁵

Thus begins a rather complicated pattern of land exchange, punctuated by probate proceedings, foreclosures, and speculation that is representative of real estate patterns of the era. Sylvia Hays, the spouse of Absalom, took out a Desert Land Patent in 1903 (recorded 1905) on another portion of Section 18. She, however, died in 1903 and the land passed to son Lucius Vanalstine. In 1905, Vanalstine then deeded the land back to Absalom for \$1.00.⁷⁶

That same year, Hays sold his holdings to one Eli Needham for \$14,500. This transaction included 880 acres located throughout Section 7 and Sections 17-20. Included in this sale were water rights recorded by Hays. These included⁷⁷:

- 1899, all the waters of Carlyle Creek⁷⁸, based on an 1895 appropriation.
- 1899, control of 700’ of the waters of a coulee ½-mile south of Carlyle Creek, based on an 1898 appropriation.
- 1902, 200’ of a tributary of Rosses Fork [sic, likely Ross Fort Creek], based on an 1900 appropriation.

In 1908, the property and the water rights were acquired by Willard Long for \$12,500. In 1906, Long had filed a “Notice of Lis Pendens” against Needham to enforce the sale. A Notice of Lis Pendens is written notice that a lawsuit has been filed concerning real estate, involving either the title to the property or a claimed ownership interest in it. The notice is taken as constructive notice of the pending lawsuit, and it serves to place a cloud on the title of the property in question until the suit is resolved and the notice is released.

Willard Long divided ownership of the land with George Stone, Harry Yaeger and William Blackford. Stone promptly conveyed his portion of the property back to Long. However, the ownership of the property was clouded by a Probate Court proceeding involving the estate of Sylvia Hays. In 1910, the Probate Court ruling confirmed the Long, Yaeger and Blackford ownership arrangement.⁷⁹

In 1910, Stuart Baxter, a resident of Iowa and apparent associate of the Naylor family, purchased the land from Long, Yaeger and Blackford for \$28,600, with the inclusion of an additional 160 acres then owned by the Northern Pacific Railroad, which Long had a sale agreement. Interestingly, this sale contract states and that sale is subject to a continued lease to Floyd Naylor, the first mention of Naylor’s connection to the land. Long received the deed to the NP property in 1913 to complete the sale.

In 1910-11 two more land exchanges concerning the property occurred. Then in 1911, Peter Behn, Jr., another Naylor financier based in Iowa, took ownership of the land. Additionally, in 1913, Baxter purchased an adjacent 160 acres, also located in Section 17. With this final acquisition, the lands that became the historic Naylor Brothers ranch were secured.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 18-31.

⁷⁷ The Abstract contains a description of the water rights assigned to the ranch on pages 5-7, 9, 11.

⁷⁸ It is likely that the Carlyle Creek named in the appropriation is actually today’s Dry Creek. The Carlyle family homesteaded on the south portion of Section 16, and are shown on the 1886 GLO map. Dry Creek, which runs through both the Carlyle Homestead and the-then Collins homestead, may have been mistakenly labeled as Carlyle Creek. Further, Carlyle Creek does not appear on any maps of the area.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 18-27.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 22

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

As noted, it appears that Naylor's presence on the land began c. 1909, as briefly described in a sale agreement made that same year. In 1917, this 1,200 acre tract was the subject of an agreement between Floyd and Roy Naylor and the Vermont Loan and Trust Company.⁸⁰ This agreement seems to have been an attempt to clarify the complicated ownership arrangement. Behn and Baxter appear to hold the title to the land and maintain a mortgage with the Vermont Loan and Trust Company, while leasing to Naylor. This agreement likely was prepared to legally demonstrate that the Vermont Loan and Trust Company's ownership rights were superior to any others associated with the land, and Floyd and Roy Naylor signed this agreement.⁸¹

The Development of the Naylor Brothers Ranch

The Naylor Brothers Ranch is named for Floyd D. Naylor and his brothers Roy and Vern, who created the ranch out of a myriad of land deals in the early twentieth century. Floyd was born in 1886 in Illinois, the third son of Edmund and Frances Naylor. In an atypical beginning for a farmer, Floyd earned a Masters Degree in Accounting at the age of 19 from Western College in Toledo, Iowa in 1905.⁸²

He intended on entering law school, but instead he left the Midwest and arrived in Straw, Montana, another of the Great Northern railroad's towns located approximately 4 miles northeast of Buffalo. Upon his arrival, he took two jobs in Buffalo, at a local general store and as a teller at the First Bank of Buffalo.⁸³ Floyd Naylor believed strongly in the opportunities Montana offered, and he made arrangements with financiers in Iowa—Peter Behn Jr., Stuart Baxter, and later H.C. Jordan—to financially support the acquisition of land located five miles east of Buffalo, MT.

In 1909-1910, Floyd's father Edmund Naylor arrived in Buffalo with the rest of his family—daughter Winnie, who became the first school teacher in Buffalo, and son's Roy, Lorin and Vern. The reunited Naylor family settled on the ranch and began a series of improvements. All of the contributing features of the ranch are attributed to the Naylor family, including the so-called Big Barn or Naylor Barn (feature 1), gravity flow water system (feature 2) and man-made pond and dam (feature 3), hog & sheep barn (feature 4), greenhouse (feature 5), bunkhouse (feature 6), garage and shop (feature 7), blacksmith shop (feature 8), which may be a building associated with a previous owner (perhaps Horace Collins) and reused by the Naylor family, the horse barn (feature 9), scale shed and scales (feature 10), grain elevator (feature 11) and machine shed (feature 12). The main residence of today's ranch was also constructed by the Naylor family, and consisted of a modern six-room house and a finished basement and concrete foundation, central heating and running water, with a bath provided in the basement for the hired help. That residence has been substantially altered for modern living. The Big Barn was constructed over the fall and winter of 1926 and 1927 by Axel Johnson. Johnson was an immigrant from Sweden who arrived in the United States in 1906. Like Floyd Naylor, Johnson and his brother Jonas arrived in Montana in 1908, residing in Ubet to help his Aunt prove up on her homestead. Johnson was an accomplished area carpenter who worked in the region for over fifty years.

Significantly, the substantial grain elevator (feature 11) is reputed to be the first and only privately-owned grain elevator in Montana, with a capacity for 16,000 bushels held in three separate chambers. The elevator along with the two substantial historic barns, are prominent among the views of the landscape in this area of the Judith Basin. Its very existence confirms the importance of dry-land wheat farming locally, and the elevator saw substantial use during the region's Golden Age. In the prosperous year of 1915, the Naylor Brothers threshed an astounding 30,000 bushels of wheat, and it is likely that the grain elevator was built immediately after 1915 as a response to the bounty the future

⁸⁰ Ibid., 85-87.

⁸¹ Ibid., 87.

⁸² *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 212.

⁸³ Ibid., 212.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 23

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

seemed to hold. 30,000 bushels of wheat is an astounding number considering the time and region. The “bushel,” in which grains are bought and sold on dry commodity markets or at local grain elevators is a unit of mass. They are measured by assigning a standard weight to each commodity that is to be measured in bushels. These bushels depend on the commodities being measured; for wheat, a unit of 60 lbs. is assigned. Thus, in that rich season in 1915, the ranch produced an amazing 1,800,000 lbs. of wheat.

In 1914, Floyd married Floy Shepherd in Iowa and brought her to Montana and at this time, Naylor brother Lorin married and sold his interest to his brothers, settling on a farm north of Lewistown. The ranch was among the larger and more profitable in the area—the 1914 Polk Directory for the lists the Naylor Brothers Ranch with an assessed tax of \$2,395.00, and by 1916 that amount had jumped to \$3,650.00. While a few ranchers have assessed taxes in excess of \$5,000, most ranches and farms in the county have less assessed value than the Naylor Brothers Ranch.⁸⁴ The 1918-19 Spanish Flu epidemic which swept across the country hit Montana particularly hard and claimed Roy Naylor,⁸⁵ leaving Floyd Naylor in charge of the ranch. While Vern assisted at the ranch, he is described as too young to have a financial stake in the operation, and served in the U.S. Army expeditionary force in France during World War I.⁸⁶ After completing his service, Vern returned to the ranch.

In 1918, Floyd temporarily moved his family to a smaller acreage located near the town of Judith Gap, though he still maintained his larger Buffalo ranch. In 1924 his family resumed residency at the Buffalo-area ranch.

At this time, Floyd began to breed first-class livestock, especially the purebred Rambouillet breed of sheep and white face cattle, known as Herefords. Renowned as a hardy breed with great adaptability to a variety of climates and forage conditions, the Rambouillet breed was noted as a “first class” wool sheep by the Montana’s Agricultural College Experiment Station⁸⁷ and originated with Spain’s famed Merino flocks, which were known as producers of the world’s finest wool. White face cattle, or Herefords also gained widespread acceptance through shows and expositions beginning in the late-nineteenth century. Herefords led the way in revolutionizing beef production in America, largely because of their early maturity that enabled market-readiness at an early age. The Naylor Brothers Ranch raised hogs along with sheep and cattle, and Floyd kept a Percheron stud at the ranch for area breeding.

Fergus County Extension Service documents reveal that the Naylor Brothers Ranch hosted a wide variety of agricultural demonstration during the mid and late-1920s, a pivotal time as farmers and ranchers struggled with and sought to negotiate with the effects of rural drought and the collapse of agricultural commodities. Beginning in 1914, county-based Cooperative Extension Services were established throughout the nation by the Smith-Lever Act, signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson. Also known as the Agriculture Extension Act, the Smith-Lever Act established cooperative agriculture services, such as the one established in Fergus County, for the purpose of sharing useful and practical information with the American farmer.⁸⁸

The Act stated that these services should consist of practical applications of research. As a result, Smith-Lever authorized a series of general demonstrations by county agents through partnerships with local farmers. These local agents served as the link between the land-grant colleges, like Montana Agricultural College (today’s Montana State University) who were conducting research and the farmer who could use the information to improve his farming system.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ R.L. Polk’s Directory of Fergus County.

⁸⁵ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 213.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ R.F. Miller, “Care and Management of Sheep on a Farm.” (Bozeman: Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, 1913), 91.

⁸⁸ See Virginia College website, <http://www.sagehistory.net/progressive/topics/progressive.html>

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 24

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

The Smith-Lever Act was one important manifestation of the Progressive Era, a massive assault on the problems that plagued American life at the turn of the twentieth century. During this transformative time, Progressives attacked a broad range of issues that changed the social and political landscape of America, believing that broadening the role of a government would advance the welfare of its citizens by protecting them from a range of economic, political, and social abuses. Government, instead of being the problem, was part of the solution.

Progressivism was broadly centered around political reform such as woman's suffrage, good governance like scientific civic management techniques and the introduction of systems of citizen initiatives, referendum and recall, and business regulation such as the famed trust-busting conducted by Theodore Roosevelt. Of equal importance were evolving ideas of social justice, exemplified by new labor laws and the urban settlement house movement, and the public welfare movement as demonstrated by new laws governing food and drug safety.⁹⁰

Progressive reforms also included the farm. The Smith-Lever Act is an excellent representation of Progressive Era goals and some historians consider the Smith-Lever Act as one of the most responsible and ingenious pieces of federal legislation ever adopted during the era.⁹¹ Many historians have pointed specifically to the development of agricultural extension services through state universities and governmental agencies as a major accomplishment of the Progressive Era.⁹²

In Montana, the first county agents predated this federal legislation, with Carl H. Peterson assigned to Fergus County in 1913.⁹³ Gallatin and Missoula counties were the next to receive agents, and the entire program expanded rapidly in 1917 to help meet the agricultural requirements of World War I. Eventually almost every county in Montana had at least one agent.

In 1926, Floyd Naylor, a man of the Progressive Era, was among the approximately two dozen farmers to devote a portion of his acreage to demonstrating to two types of grain: Approved Horn Barley and Approved Markton Oats. Then, in 1927, a publication issued by the Montana State College Extension Service, noted that Naylor was a member of the 20-person Livestock Committee, which issued a county-wide report on livestock production.

Beginning in 1928, Naylor increased his participation in county demonstration programs, including the shelterbelt program, where his ranch was one of sixteen county ranches chosen for shelterbelt placement. In his annual report of the same year, the Extension Agent wrote that "This [shelterbelt] was one of the most valuable farm development pieces of work [sic] being carried on by the organizations interested in the development of Fergus County..."⁹⁴

The Fergus County Extension Office scheduled field days at the ranch to provide area farmers with the newest farming information and techniques. The Naylor Brothers Ranch appears to have been an important location for sheep demonstrations, especially those dedicated to increasing lamb health and market value. Naylor is referred to extensively throughout the report on sheep, and his observations regarding lamb nutrition and mineral mixtures, culling, pasture management, and marketing and finishing form the backbone of the report. Interestingly, Naylor is also noted as an advocate for early lambing. In winter, the argument goes, farmers have more time to devote to lambing, and historically lambs often reach their highest market value around Easter, another advantage of winter lamb. Adequate facilities are also critical to lamb successfully in winter. A sheltered area for ewes to give birth, a lambing pen, and pens for ewes (that

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ See Stephen Diner. <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/progressive/diner.html>

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ See <http://www.lib.montana.edu/collect/spcoll/findaid/acc00021.html>

⁹⁴ Dan B. Noble, *Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics—Narrative Report*, (Fergus County, December 1, 1927—November 30, 1928) 24.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 25

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

are both with and without young lambs), are required. Naylor built his “Big Barn” to meet the requirements for successful winter lambing. The report also includes two images of sheep demonstration inspections occurring at the ranch. One photograph shows sheep growers inspecting a sheep flock that is grazing in the field, while another shows inspectors checking a sheep in a pen adjacent to the Hog & Sheep Barn (feature 4), with the caption “Wool Growers at the ranch of Floyd Naylor, checking up on some of Mr. Naylor’s methods.”⁹⁵ These images are included in the nomination.

Naylor’s sheep work is also the subject of another document, the *Fergus County Agricultural Development Program—1928*. In the chapter entitled “Livestock—Sheep Division,” Naylor is noted as one of the few county farmers who had developed a way to neutralize the fatal effects of sweet clover on sheep, which otherwise enabled a high carrying capacity and very high feed value.⁹⁶ The document also contains an important photograph which shows the 1926-27 construction of the Naylor Barn (feature 1). The caption described the barn as “a modern lambing shed under construction by Floyd Naylor of Buffalo. M. Naylor has tried to make it most convenient, thus reducing costs and increasing livability of lambing.”⁹⁷ In a 1973 biographical sketch of her father, Floyd’s daughter Eleanor noted that “[H]e could lamb about 400 ewes in February under cover. This gave the lambs about two extra months of growing before marker.”⁹⁸ Eleanor also notes that the gravity flow watering system (feature 2) was built “about 1927,” and it is likely that the associated pond and dam (feature 3) were also constructed at this time.

In 1929, Naylor expanded the scope of demonstration projects at his ranch to include cattle. Naylor was one of six county cattlemen to conduct finishing demonstrations at his ranch.⁹⁹ Generally, “finishing” is the phase in beef production where cattle are moved from the fields to a feedlot environment and placed on a full grain diet with only limited amounts of roughage. This type of diet, which is closely monitored for amounts and nutritional value, is maintained until market weight is reached. Finishing is believed to produce better tasting beef at a reduced cost. He noted that sixty-nine head of cattle were part of the demonstration, and that the cattle “weighed the 6th of November at 406 lbs, feed rye, oats with a little hay and all the roughage they would consume, weighed out on the first of May at 605 lbs., practically 200 pounds gain, put on sweet clover pasture until about the 22nd of June then on native grass until the first of September weighing out 775 pounds...Mr. Naylor believed that he could get a very good finish on heavy oats with barley.”¹⁰⁰

That same year, Naylor also conducted finishing demonstrations involving sheep. The report describes the feeding process undertaken by Naylor, including the average weight of the demonstration sheep as finishing progressed, their diet, and the price Naylor received on the Chicago market.¹⁰¹

The report also describes Naylor’s involvement in the county “Agricultural Economics” program. The core of this program was the establishment of better farm management practices designed to increase profitability and decrease costs. The Extension Service sent a letter to “50 of the most progressive farmers in the county,”¹⁰² which invited participation in the program. Seven farmers responded and were selected, including Floyd Naylor. A record-keeping system was established, and a set of metrics were created, designed to build information regarding farm efficiency and practices. A farm inventory was also undertaken. Naylor stated that he had 715 acres of tilled land and 485 untilled acres, with a net worth of \$85,948.91. 530 acres were under wheat cultivation, with another 20 acres dedicated to oats and 160 acres to

⁹⁵ Ibid., 34-39, 40.

⁹⁶ Farm Organizations and Interests of Fergus County, *Fergus County Agricultural Development Program—1928*, (Fergus County, 1928), 26.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁹⁸ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 213.

⁹⁹ Dan B. Noble, *Narrative Annual Report of Fergus County*, (Fergus County, 1929), 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁰² Ibid, As quoted on p. 26.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 26

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

corn. He was also the only sheep producer on the list of participants.¹⁰³ The report includes a photograph of the Naylor Barn surrounded by ewes and lambs, with a caption describing the management objective for sheep as “Fourteen pounds of wool and 130% lamb crop is the goal set and being inspected [sic] by sheep men on their tour in June.”¹⁰⁴

From Extension Service records, it appears that Naylor continued to participate in agricultural demonstrations right up until foreclosure in 1931. In 1930 and until foreclosure the following year, he contributed to the shelterbelt demonstration, though the 1930 report notes that “Due to the severe winter in 1930 the demonstrators report the worst killing of shelterbelt trees of any other season. However, Many [sic] farmers lay this heavy loss of trees on the dry season in 1929.”¹⁰⁵

In 1930, the Naylor Brothers Ranch was also selected to represent the Buffalo area in a crop standardization project. Naylor planted 100 acres of Newturk Wheat which yielded 1200 bushels and 80 acres of Karmont Wheat that produced 720 bushels.¹⁰⁶ Locally, Newturk outperformed other wheat varieties, but the extension agent noted that final results were likely skewed by the severe drought, and that some grain was simply not harvested due to low yields.¹⁰⁷ That year, Naylor was also one of nine area farmers to participate in a mustard seed demonstration, planting 160 acres for this specialized crop. The agent noted the promise that this type of crop held for area farms, and that the price was very good for the seed, but that the drought had severely impacted results.¹⁰⁸

The need for data regarding precipitation grew as the drought progressed through the 1920s and into the 1930s. The local Fergus County Democrat newspaper, together with the Extension Service sponsored the establishment of eighteen rain gauges throughout the county. One gauge was established at the Naylor Brothers Ranch, and rainfall amounts from May through November 1930 were tallied. For 1930, the ranch received a paltry total of 8.36 inches—about sixty percent under the recorded average and the second lowest amount measured by any of the gauges.¹⁰⁹

Besides the shelterbelt program, Naylor was one of three area farmers to have participated in a single project involving lamb finishing. Here, the initial weight, diet, and weight increases were measured over the course of several months. The results of the finishing program were measured by comparing the gross income per head at market with the feed cost per head. Floyd Naylor’s methods earned him a net profit per head of .83 cents, the highest among the participating farmers.

Finally, Naylor may also be the first farmer in the Judith Basin to purchase and use a combine.¹¹⁰ The first use of the combine on the ranch was filmed by the McCormick Deering Company, a Chicago company that modernized farming techniques beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, and who took advantage of the development of railroads to market their equipment nationwide. Company founder Cyrus McCormick developing a vast network of trained salesmen able to demonstrate operation of the machines in the field. The Naylor Ranch demonstration has been preserved in still photographs of the combine at work in his fields.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 25-30.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁵ W.H. Jones, *Narrative Annual Report of Fergus County*, (Fergus County, 1930), 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 79.

¹¹⁰ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 213. This claim, like the status of the grain elevator, was made by Eleanor Naylor in a biographical sketch of her father Floyd, and is difficult to prove.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 27

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

The End of the Naylor Era

In 1921, one M.J. Boor acquired a portion of the ranch, though Naylor maintained his lease. Peter Behn assigned responsibility for the mortgage to business partner and fellow-Iowan H.C. Jordan, who was also Behn's father-in-law. In 1924, Boor defaulted in his mortgage payments and Jordan began foreclosure proceedings against Boor. Following the approval of the foreclosure by the State of Montana District Court, H.C. Jordan took out a \$25,000 mortgage with the Prudential Insurance Company of America in 1926.

This financial arrangement was the beginning of the end of Naylor-era on ranch lands. When H.C. Jordan died in 1926, responsibility for the mortgage passed to his spouse, Rebecca. That same year, both Stuart Baxter and Floyd Naylor filed a Quit Claim on the property with Jordan.¹¹¹ A Quit Claim deed is a term used to describe a document by which a person (the grantor) disclaims any interest they may have in a piece of property and passes that claim to another person (the grantee). Quit Claim deeds are sometimes used for transfers between family members, to place personal property into a business entity, or to eliminate clouds on title, but a quit claim deed does not mean that the grantor's claim is actually valid. It appears that Naylor filed the Quit Claim in order to protect himself financially in case of foreclosure, which he likely sensed was a growing possibility.

Rebecca Jordan defaulted on the mortgage, and in 1931, Prudential began foreclosure proceedings against both Rebecca Jordan and Floyd Naylor, with Naylor noted by Prudential as having an inferior interest in the land in comparison to Jordan. The State District Court approved the foreclosure in 1931, and the ranch became the property of Prudential.¹¹²

Despite the loss of his ranch, Naylor stayed in the area and continued with farm and ranch work. He and his family moved to the outskirts of Buffalo where he started a small sheep shearing business. He also retained his combine equipment and apparently traveled much of the Northwest, hiring out to farms during the harvest.¹¹³ Despite the ongoing Depression, the business was lucrative enough, and allowed the Naylor family to purchase a home in Lewistown in c. 1936. After several years, and at the age of 63, Naylor sold his business and ended a lifetime in the fields. He and Floy settled permanently in Lewistown, where he traded his combine for a ledger book, taking a job as a bookkeeper for a local lumber company. Floyd retired when he was 72 years old, and passed away in Fergus County in July 1969.

Modern Ownership

The ranch appears to have been leased by Prudential to farmers immediately following the Naylor Era. One recent visitor to today's ranch met with ranch manager Cory Merrill, and noted that her family lived at the ranch in 1932. She showed Mr. Merrill where her brother carved his initial into the barn, along with the date "1932." The ranch was likely alternately vacant or leased to temporary residents until 1940, when Fred C. Biehl, with his wife Ethel, son Donald and daughter Emma McGuire with her husband Pat McGuire moved to and leased the Naylor Ranch. In 1943, Fred began to take formal ownership. Prudential deeded the land to the Biehls for \$20,000, with a \$15,000 mortgage. By 1945, Biehl had fully paid the mortgage to Prudential. One year earlier, Donald Biehl died, and another son, Clarence moved to the Naylor Ranch. Fred formed a ranching partnership with Clarence and another son, Fred L, and Clarence inherited further adjacent property through his father's untimely death in 1959 which created today's Mountain View Ranch¹¹⁴ that encompasses the original Naylor Brothers Ranch.

The Clarence Biehl family lived on the ranch until 1972, when the ranch was purchased by Durl Gibbs, the current owner.

¹¹¹ *Abstract*, 136.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 169-185.

¹¹³ *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*, 213.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 204-206

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 28

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Conclusion

The Naylor Brothers Ranch is reflective of the changing patterns of settlement and agricultural history in north central Montana from early-twentieth century to the beginning of Great Depression. This 1,200 acre parcel retains cultural resources related to the area's period of agricultural bounty and increased development of the early twentieth century. The property, like many others, was challenged by drought and economic collapse beginning in 1919, yet continued to find ways to survive, largely through participation in new conservation developments and county agricultural programs emblematic of the Progressive Era. In 1931, the Naylor Brothers Ranch succumbed to foreclosure, mirroring historic trends faced by countless farms and ranches across the Great Plains.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9

Page 29

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Consulted References

- Brownell, Joan L. *Cultural Resource Inventory, Judith Gap-Glengarry 100 KV Transmission Line*. Butte: The Montana Power Company, 1989.
- Bureau of Land Management, *Class III Cultural Resource Inventory of Selected Bureau of Land Management Parcels in Blaine, Fergus, Hill, Choteau, and Toole Counties, Montana*. Report #02-MT-066-011, 2002.
- Byerly, Ken. *Central Montana Communities: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Lewistown: Central Montana Publishing Co., 1980.
- DeMallie, Raymond J, ed, *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 13, Plains*. Parts 1 and 2. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001.
- Diner, Stephen. Historiography of the Progressive Era, at the Organization of American Historians website. Viewable at <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/progressive/diner.html>
- General Land Office, *Survey Nap of Township 12 North, Range 16 East, Montana Territory*, 1886.
- Hedges, Wyllys A. Mrs. *History of Fergus County, MT*. Lewistown: Lewistown Women's Club, 1927.
- Hidy, Ralph W. *The Great Northern Railway: A History*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988.
- "Historic Fire Insurance Maps of Buffalo, Montana, 1929." Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. <http://sanborn.umi.com/>, July 2007.
- Hoxie, Frederick E. *Parading through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America 1805-1935*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *Narrative Report, December 1, 1926 to November 30, 1927*. Lewistown: Published by Montana State College and the Extension Service, 1927.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *Narrative Report, December 1, 1927 to November 30, 1928*. Lewistown: Published by Montana State College and the Extension Service, 1928.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *A Program for the Development of Agriculture in Fergus County, Montana*. Lewistown, Issued by the Montana State College Extension Service, July 1927.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *A Program for the Development of Agriculture in Fergus County, Montana*. Lewistown, Issued by the Montana State College Extension Service, 1928.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *Narrative Report*. Lewistown: Published by Montana State College and the Extension Service, 1929.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *Narrative Report, December 1, 1930 to November 30, 1931*. Lewistown: Published by Montana State College and the Extension Service, 1930.
- Fergus County Extension Service. *Narrative Report*. Lewistown: Published by Montana State College and the Extension Service, 1931.
- Fergus County Tax Assessor Office. "Residential Data Collection Form, #2137 07 4 04 01 and #2137 17 2 01 01." Lewistown, MT. Viewed July 2008.
- Jenks, Jim. *A Guide to Historic Bozeman*. Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2007.
- Koury, Michael J. *Guarding the Carroll Trail and Camp Lewis, 1874-1875*. Fort Collins: The Old Army Press, 1985.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.
- Merrill, Cory. "Montana State Historic Preservation Office Historic Site Evaluation Form for the Naylor

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9

Page 30

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

- Ranch/Mountain View Ranch," Helena: State Historic Preservation Office Form. 2008
- Merrill, Cory. Conversation with the Author. Mountain View Ranch, 15 July 2008.
- Miller, R.F. "Care and Management of Sheep on a Farm." Bozeman: Montana Agricultural Experiment Station. Circular 31, 1913.
- Montana Business Service, *In The Shadow of the Twin Sisters: Ubet, Garniell, Straw, Buffalo, Montana*. Lewistown: Montana Business Service, 1973.
- Montana State University, Special Collections. Brief history of the Montana Extension Service. Viewable at <http://www.lib.montana.edu/collect/spcoll/findaid/acc00021.html>
- Murdock, H.E. *Farm Buildings*. Bozeman: Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 131, 1926.
- National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 16, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990, rev. 1991, 1995, 1997, 1998.
- National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 16A, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.
- Noble, Allen G and Richard K. Cleek. *The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Noble, Allen G and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm. *Barns of the Midwest*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995.
- Noble, Dan B. *Narrative Annual Report of Fergus County*. Fergus County, 1929.
- Noble, Dan B. *Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics—Narrative Report*. Fergus County, December 1, 1927—November 30, 1928.
- R.L. Polk & Co.'s *Fergus County Directory*, Various years.
- Realty and Abstract Company, *Abstract of Title*. (Lewistown: Date of Compilation Unknown)
- Silliman, Lee. "The Carroll Trail: Utopian Enterprise," in *Montana the Magazine of Western History*. Spring 1974.
- Stafford, George. *Field Notes of the Subdivision Lines of Township 12N, Range 16E of the Principal Meridian, Montana Territory*. Washington D.C.: General Land Office, 1886.
- United States Census Bureau. Census of Population and Housing, viewable at www.census.gov.
- United States Geological Survey. 7.5 Minute Topographical Maps of the Moore SW Quadrangle (1995) and Buffalo Quadrangle (1970).
- United States Government; Bureau of Land Management. Various General Land Office Records for Fergus and Meagher County. www.glorerecords.blm.gov/patentsearch.htm. July 2007.
- Virginia College. American Experience, viewable at <http://www.sagehistory.net/progressive/topics/progressive.html>
- Worthen, C.B. *The History of Central Montana to 1871*. Publisher unknown, 1915.
- Zellick, Anna. *A History of Fergus County from 1879 to 1915*. M.A. Thesis, 1943.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

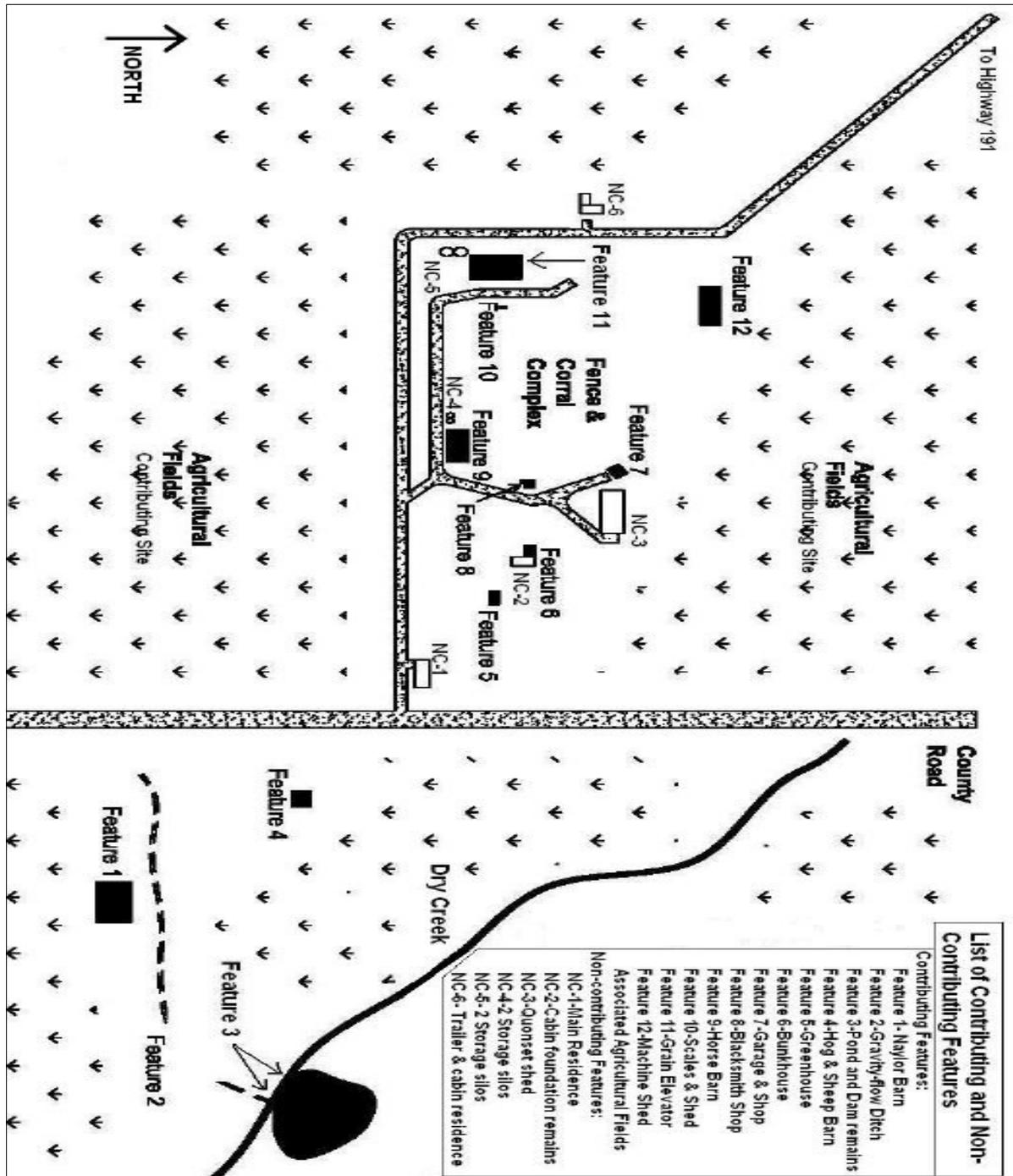
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10

Page 31

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Historic Property Sketch Map



- List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Features**
- Contributing Features:**
- Feature 1-Naylor Barn
 - Feature 2-Grain-flow Ditch
 - Feature 3-Pond and Dam remains
 - Feature 4-Hog & Sheep Barn
 - Feature 5-Greenhouse
 - Feature 6-Bunhouse
 - Feature 7-Garage & Shop
 - Feature 8-Blacksmith Shop
 - Feature 9-Horse Barn
 - Feature 10-Scales & Shed
 - Feature 11-Grain Elevator
 - Feature 12-Machine Shed
- Associated Agricultural Fields**
- Non-contributing Features:**
- NC-1-Main Residence
 - NC-2-Cabin foundation remains
 - NC-3-Quonset shed
 - NC-4-2 Storage silos
 - NC-5-2 Storage silos
 - NC-6-Trailer & cabin residence

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

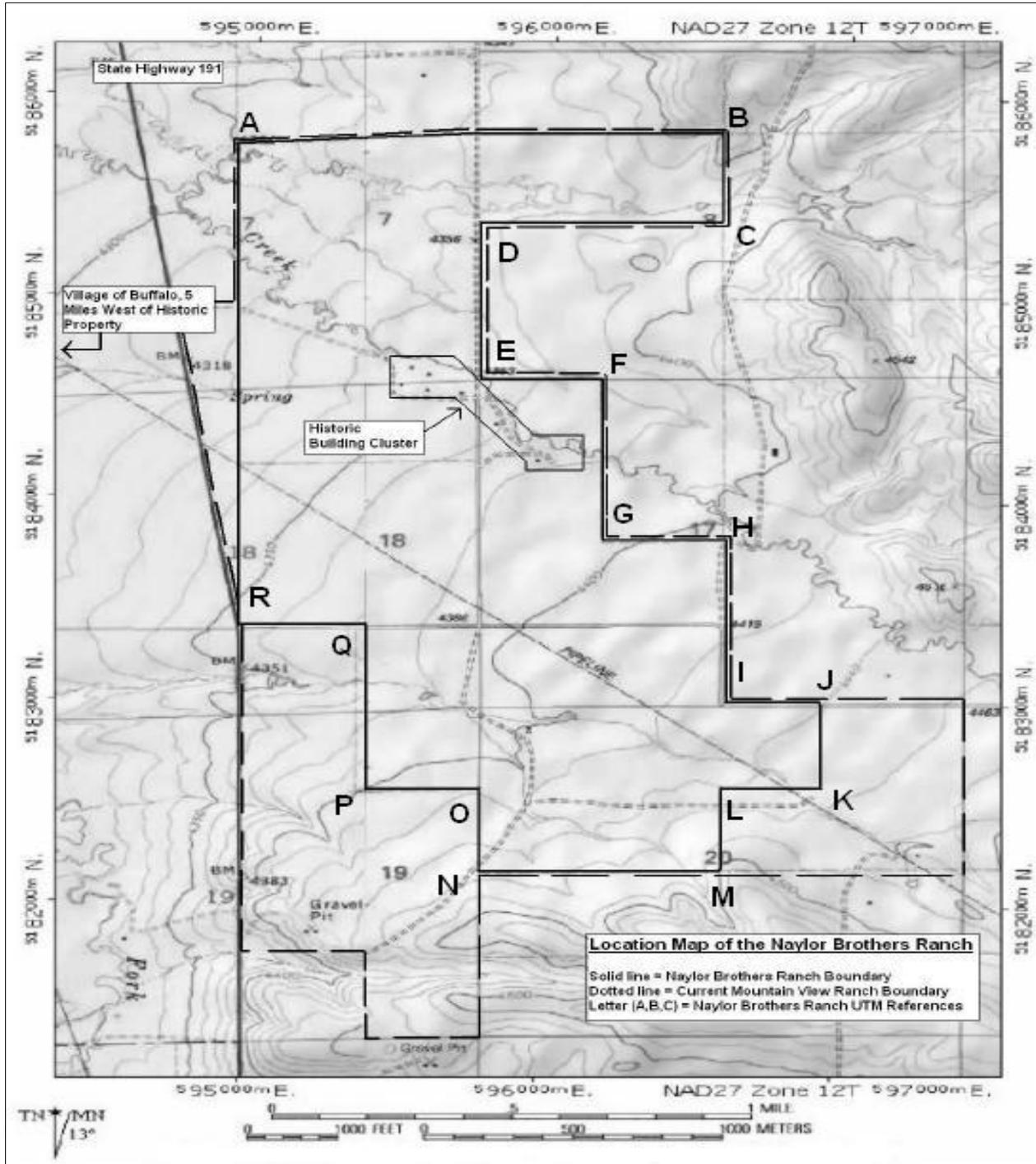
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Page 32

Location Map



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Page 33

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Photographs

In accordance with the March 2005 Photo Policy expansion, the photos that accompany this nomination are printed on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper, using a Hewlett Packard 100 gray photo cartridge. This combination of paper and inks is included on the NR's list of "Acceptable Ink and Paper combinations for Digital Images." The images are also recorded on an archival CD-R with a resolution at least 1200x1800 pixels, 300 dpi in "true color" 24-bit format.

All photographs are of the nominated property, the Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District, in the vicinity of Buffalo, in Fergus County, MT. Photographed by Jim Jenks, July through August 2008. Electronic images stored at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

- Photo 1 of 29. Overview of the historic building cluster, Naylor Brothers Ranch. Facing east from a side road adjacent to State Highway 191.
- Photo 2 of 29. Overview of the historic building cluster, Naylor Brothers Ranch. Facing east from State Highway 191.
- Photo 3 of 29. Naylor Barn, feature 1, facing west.
- Photo 4 of 29. Gravity flow ditch remains, feature 2, facing west
- Photo 5 of 29. Man-made pond, feature 3, facing northeast.
- Photo 6 of 29. Dam remains, feature 3, facing south.
- Photo 7 of 29. Hog and Sheep Barn, feature 4, facing north.
- Photo 8 of 29. Greenhouse, feature 5, facing north.
- Photo 9 of 29. Bunkhouse, feature 6, facing north.
- Photo 10 of 29. Garage and Shop, feature 7, facing northwest.
- Photo 11 of 29. Blacksmith Shop, feature 8, facing north.
- Photo 12 of 29. Horse Barn, feature 9, facing northwest.
- Photo 13 of 29. Scales and Scale Shed, feature 10, facing east.
- Photo 14 of 29. Grain Elevator, feature 11, facing northwest.
- Photo 15 of 29. Machine Shed, feature 12, facing east.
- Photo 16 of 29. Associated agricultural field, hay field, facing south from historic building cluster.
- Photo 17 of 29. Associated agricultural field, hay field, facing north from historic building cluster.
- Photo 18 of 29. Non-contributing element 1: The Main Residence, view to northeast.
- Photo 19 of 29. Non-contributing element 2: Foundation remains, view to south.
- Photo 20 of 29. Non-contributing element 3: Quonset shed, view to north.
- Photo 21 of 29. Non-contributing element 4: Two Storage Silos, view to north.
- Photo 22 of 29. Non-contributing element 5: Two Storage Silos, view to east.
- Photos 23a and 23b of 29. Non-contributing element 6: Trailer and moved log cabin residence, view to west of trailer and view to south of cabin.
- Photo 24 of 29. Historic image of the Hog and Sheep Barn (feature 4) with the Grain Elevator (feature 11) in the background, from the 1928 Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report. Facing northwest.
- Photo 25 of 29. Historic image of the 1926-27 construction of the Naylor Barn (feature 1), from the 1928 Fergus County Agricultural Development Program. Facing west.
- Photo 26 of 29. Historic image of the Naylor Barn (feature 1), from the 1929 Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report.
- Photo 27 of 29. Historic image of an inspection of Floyd Naylor's sheep demonstration, at the Naylor Brothers Ranch. From the 1928 Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report.
- Photo 28 of 29. Historic image of the 1915 wheat crop, with Roy Naylor and wheat threshing at the Naylor Brothers Ranch. From *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*.
- Photo 29 of 29. Image of the 1886 General Land Office Map, showing the historic Carroll Road crossing the location of the Naylor Brothers Ranch historic building cluster.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 34

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 1 of 29. Overview of the historic building cluster with associated agricultural fields, Naylor Brothers Ranch. Facing east from a side road adjacent to State Highway 191.



Photo 2 of 29. Overview of the historic building cluster, Naylor Brothers Ranch. Facing east from State Highway 191.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Page 35



Photo 3 of 29. Naylor Barn, feature 1, facing west.



Photo 4 of 29. Gravity flow ditch remains, feature 2, facing west.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Page 36



Photo 5 of 29. Man-made pond, feature 3, facing northeast.



Photo 6 of 29. Dam remains, feature 3, facing south.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 37

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 7 of 29. Hog and Sheep Barn, feature 4, facing north.



Photo 8 of 29. Greenhouse, feature 5, facing north.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 38

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 9 of 29. Bunkhouse, feature 6, facing north.



Photo 10 of 29. Garage and Shop, feature 7, facing northwest.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 39

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 11 of 29. Blacksmith Shop, feature 8, facing north.



Photo 12 of 29. Horse Barn, feature 9, facing northwest.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Page 40



Photo 13 of 29. Scales and Scale Shed, feature 10, facing east.



Photo 14 of 29. Grain Elevator, feature 11, facing northwest.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 41

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 15 of 29. Machine Shed, feature 12, facing east.



Photo 16 of 29. Associated agricultural field, hay field, facing south from historic building cluster.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 42

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 17 of 29. Associated agricultural field, hay field, facing north from historic building cluster.



Photo 18 of 29. Non-contributing element 1: The Main Residence, view to northeast.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 43

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 19 of 29. Non-contributing element 2: Foundation remains, view to south.



Photo 21 of 29. Non-contributing element 3: Quonset shed, view to north.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Page 44

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 21 of 29. Non-contributing element 4: Two storage silos, view to north.



Photo 22 of 29. Non-contributing element 5: Two storage silos, view to east.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Page 45

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photos 23a and 23b of 29.

Non-contributing element 6: Trailer and moved log cabin residence, view to west of the trailer and view to south of the cabin.



Photo 24 of 29.

Historic image of the Hog Barn (feature 4) with the Grain Elevator (feature 11) in the background, from the 1928 Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

Page 46

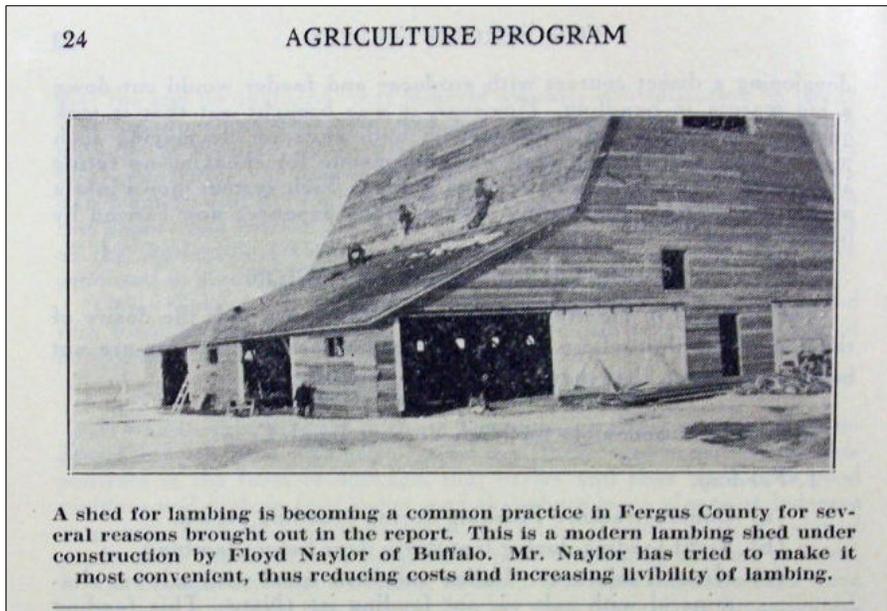


Photo 25 of 29. Historic image of the 1926-27 construction of the Naylor Barn (feature 1), from the 1928 *Fergus County Agricultural Development Program*. Photo facing west.

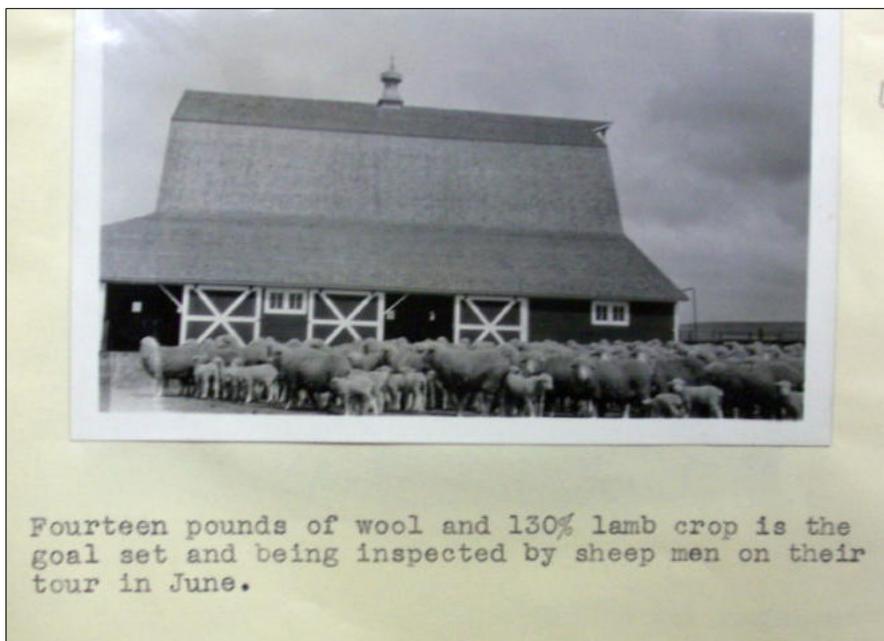


Photo 26 of 29. Historic image of the Naylor Barn (feature 1), from the 1929 *Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report*. Photo facing north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Page 47

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT



Photo 27 of 29. Historic image of an inspection of Floyd Naylor's sheep demonstration, at the Naylor Brothers Ranch. From the 1928 *Fergus County Extension Service Annual Report*.

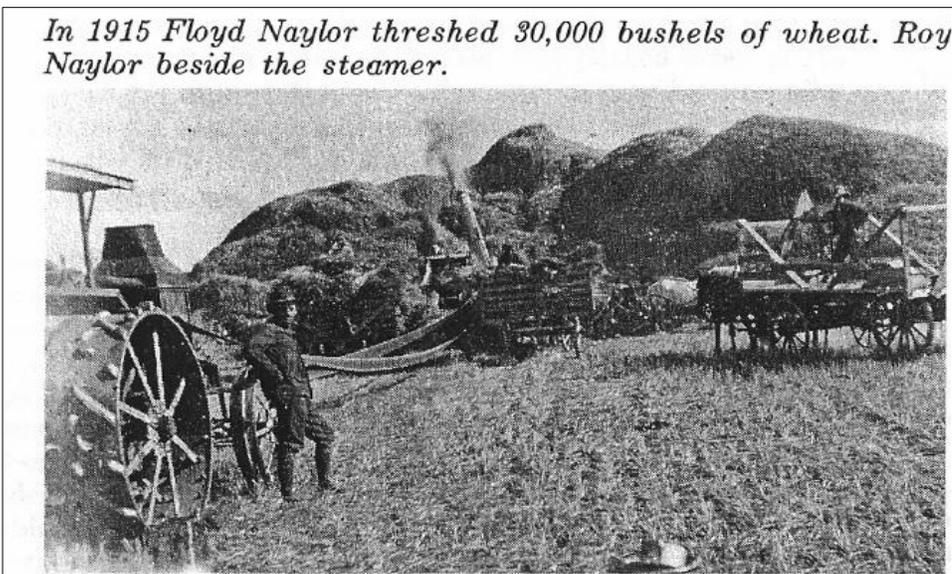


Photo 28 of 29. Historic image of the 1915 wheat crop, with Roy Naylor and wheat threshing at the Naylor Brothers Ranch. From *In the Shadow of the Twin Sisters*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Page 48

Naylor Brothers Ranch Historic District
Fergus County, MT

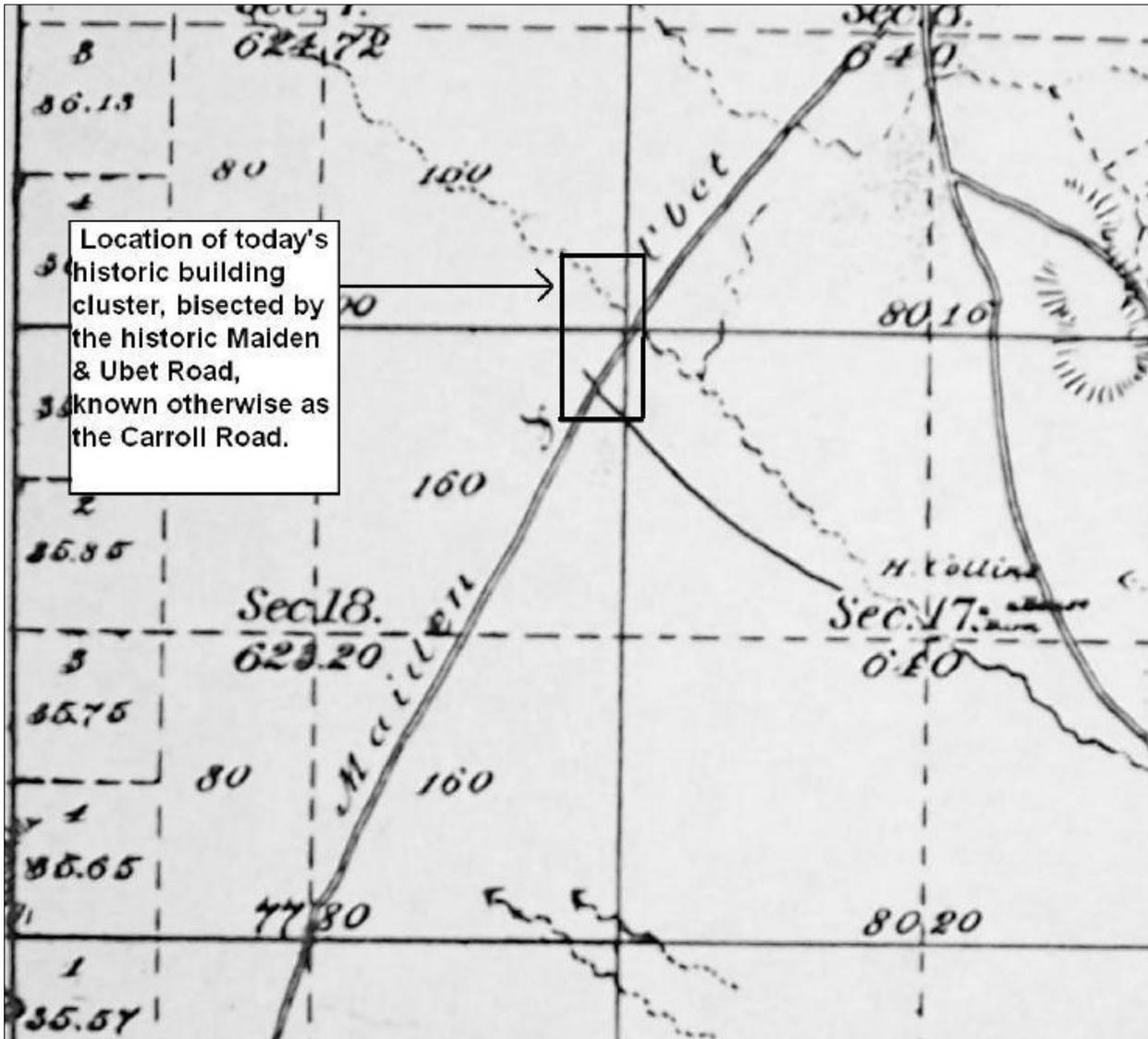


Photo 29 of 29. Image of the 1886 General Land Office Map, showing the historic Carroll Road crossing the location of the Naylor Brothers Ranch historic building cluster.